



Claims Conference Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection

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Frank and Alice (Lizzie) Briess left their home in what is now known as the Czech Republic on 13 March 1939, 2 days before Hitler marched in. After six months in London as refugees they finally received permission, after three applications, to come to New Zealand on the condition that a bond of two thousand pounds be posted.

They boarded ship at Southampton two days before war was declared and began a diary of their experiences by keeping carbon copies of their letters home. Arriving in Auckland, they decided to go farming. They had no experience of farming, but took over their 42 acre farm at Massey near Auckland just at Haymaking time! The letters became fewer and eventually stopped at war's end as the fate of their various family members became known.

Both Frank and Lizzie came from what might be described as "upper middle class" families. Lizzie's father was a doctor, the only educated child of 16 siblings. Frank's family had been in the spice and grain business in Moravia for many generations. Frank worked in the family business, Lizzie studied medicine at Prague University but married Frank just before sitting her final exams. She never returned to medicine. The material status of the families is clearly documented. In my parents' wedding contract and inheritance agreement it states the dowry that Lizzie brought into the marriage and, in addition to the money, lists jewellery, furs and other goods and gave control of the administration of her property to Frank, even freeing him of the obligation of accounting for the disposal of the income.

When Frank's brother Fredi married a non-Jewish girl, Irene, the family did not even attend the wedding. Perhaps they were not invited. Presented with a fait accompli Grandmama Adi wrote to Frank in London "Irene is quite well turned out really, but not at all well educated!" Fredi and Irene later separated in the hope of securing her safety. Fredi was deported to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp and died early in 1945. Adi was the only close member of the extended family of over 60 who survived the Concentration Camps and she eventually came to New Zealand in 1947. She spoke seven languages. At the same time my uncle and aunt, Otto and Marianne and their daughter Marietta joined them in Auckland. They had sat out the war in New York, having escaped Czechoslovakia in 1940.

When I asked my father why he chose to come to New Zealand he always answered that he turned the globe upside down to show which country was the most distant from Europe. When they left Europe Frank was 31, Lizzie was 27.

Claire Bruell nee Briess, daughter of Frank and Lizzie Briess
Auckland, New Zealand

1st August 2008

6th September 1939 6.30 a.m. where I don't know, somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, heading approximately south.

Dear Mama, dear Martuska,

I don't know if you received the last postcard we sent from European ground, which we posted on embarcation in Southampton. Lizzie will give you more details as I want to answer your letter of the 27th of last month. Above all, of course, we are glad that we got 2 tickets, but were upset 2 days after we left to see the telegram on the noticeboard that war had been declared. In the few days before our departure we worked from early morning to late at night to get ready in time. On Thursday 31st August we wanted to phone you but it wasn't possible any more. On the Friday, after embarcation we wanted to send you a telegram but that wasn't possible either, so we sent a postcard and hope that you received it.

Mr. Reinhart was very decent, and through him we received the addresses of 2 people who live in New Zealand which we got on the day we left. We were also at Herzogs. They wished us well for our journey and also gave us a box of sweets. Herzog's address is Prof. David Herzog, 57 Clissold Court, Green Lane, London N.4. We didn't say goodbye to Josef but sent our regards through his parents to whom we had written a farewell letter. When we boarded we found a farewell telegram which was big surprise. We did our best about Hans and now it depends completely on Josef, though it should've all been tied up long ago. We started the ball rolling with Edith's (a cousin) affairs and handed it all over to Selma and Edith has to deal with her now. We've already enquired about the trustees in our last letter and want your news in this regard. As far as Dr. K. is concerned, we think it's perhaps better now to leave things, there's no point and you can ask his advice if you need something. Concerning Otto, he's not having any more trouble with the house, but in the end he got nothing out of it. Things went smoothly with my teeth, the dentist did a really good job, only it cost the earth - £4. Please write straightaway Fr. Briess, c/- Thomas Cook & Son Ltd., Auckland, New Zealand, or if it's not possible, to send it direct to New Zealand, then please send it to Dr. Friedrich Herzog, 58 Karlavaegen Pension, Sehrmen, Stockholm. As a last resort write 2 copies and send one to us direct and one via Dr. Herzog. All letters on light airmail paper please. Please exchange all letters with my parents in Olmütz. Now the gentleman, I mean lady's turn -

We have been on board now for 6 days and feel really good. The first few days we were seasick, as the boat rocked quite a bit, but today the sea is quieter and we're getting used to it. The ship is 15,000 tons, carrying 200 passengers, the rest of the space for freight. Food and service are very good and if we didn't have our worries over all our family we could be very happy. We get the news over the radio, the broadcasts are sparse. Otherwise we have all comforts. First stop is in Curacao on the 13th (Dutch colony) on the 15th in Colon (Panama Canal) and then we go direct to Auckland. From Curacao we should get a cabin together. On board there are almost all English, Australians and New Zealanders, the only other refugees are the König family. People are generally very nice, friendly and approachable. We're now coming to the hot weather and nights in the cabin will be less comfortable. We're sorry about Otto and Marianne but we did our best. Rudi (Broll - Selma's husband) has our itinerary. There is nothing but water all around us and the trip via Suez India and Australia would have been nicer but we're happy the way it is. It is, of course, very upsetting for us to be so far from all our loved ones and to have no news, especially in these uncertain times. We will write continuous letters because it is impossible to wait for answers. We will be celebrating Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur on board ship for the first time in our lives. Please write continuously to us, with our love and kisses,

Your children

(Written by Frank to Lizzie's mother, Marta Löwy)

Pacific Ocean 22.9.1939

Dearest Mama,

I have no possibility of posting this letter but I want to write to you today. We are always with you in thought especially this evening when the (Jewish) holidays begin (Erev). Unfortunately we haven't heard from you for 3 weeks and it will be a longer time yet before we get any news. I hope you are getting mail from us - we being more-or-less in safety wish even more that you know what's happening to us. It must be a terrible feeling to have children somewhere on the other side of the world and not be able to get in touch with each other. On the whole I must say, that we are glad to have got this far. We have been delayed by 3 days so we won't arrive till the 8th. We hear that the weather in New Zealand now is similar to our April weather. You have the heating on in the house to the end of October, beginning at the end of May. The temperature is generally the same as at home, only milder. Of course, we are very excited asking people for information, learning quite a lot, but we will see when we are the spot first before forming opinions. Life there is not cheap and lately it got even more expensive. H. Perl lives in the best suburb of Auckland so he must be doing reasonably well. Hopefully he will be as helpful to us as his correspondence promises. After our experiences in London we are very skeptical. Onboard ship we have got to know many Aucklanders, some people have invited us to their homes, but such things might be very quickly forgotten by English people once we have landed so we're not too hopeful.

Mr & Mrs König are quite a disappointment, now that we have got to know them better. They expect something quite different from life there, so we'll each go our own ways. I could've already earned some money on board ship, I manicured the nails of 2 friends and others who saw the results asked me if I would do theirs, for payment, as there is no manicurist on board. But for several reasons I refused. One lady gave me 2 lovely glasses for doing her nails. Not bad, huh! It's 3 weeks today since we boarded, it doesn't seem that long, on the other hand everyone is getting restless because it's so boring. Since yesterday we can have the windows open again. The last couple of days have been cool, we're wearing long-sleeved pullovers and long pants. We are both very well fitted out. The only thing which is annoying is that we can't get at our luggage. The ship is full, but nevertheless, with a bit of goodwill it could've been arranged. Aside from everything else my sleeping companion is a bad-tempered old lady who speaks to no-one, often doesn't even answer my greetings and makes the short time I spend in the cabin very unpleasant. Since it got colder again I'm sleeping in the cabin. Instead of landing in Colon we landed in Balboa on Saturday, at the end of the Panama Canal. From Balboa we went inland to Panama City. It was very interesting there. All coloured people, Chinese, Japanese, an incredible noise like a city in the south (of Europe), everything mixed up, in one word, "wild west". It must be terrible for Europeans to live there. Still there are immigrants there, so we heard. The Panama Canal as such is quite an experience that one certainly wouldn't forget, and to a certain degree compensates for the monotony of the trip. A masterpiece that you can't imagine was conceived by man. The marvel is in this - the ship is in the Caribbean Sea which has a low water level and must manoeuvre its position to the Pacific Ocean, or Still Ocean, which has a higher level. This is made possible through locks. The blacks come on board and take over the controls of the boat. The boat is pulled by being fastened to cables on 8 machines which are on land and it is winched by the machines which run on gears. When the boat has passed a lock and is between that one and the next, the water level either rises or sinks, whichever is necessary. Throughout the procedure you travel through beautiful palms and bush, well cultivated, they can rightly be proud of it, as the Americans are. What is worrying us most now is how to get you to join us. We hope to find out more about the situation in New Zealand and so to formulate a plan. We are very worried that the situation will have changed for the worst.

.....Today is the 28th. I'm writing a few lines more. In 10 days we should be on the spot and so we are getting impatient. It is cold now after several days on warmer weather, the boat is heated and we are wearing warmer clothes. I'm giving bridge lessons daily and receive English lessons in return. My partner is a New Zealand farmer's wife, she has regular bridge lessons because it is important. She is an intelligent student. Please give the news to Otto etc. they should write regularly.

1/10/1939

Today is the 1st of October and I'm writing more news. Actually nothing much has happened. Yesterday the sea was rough but it didn't bother us. We must've got used to it. Many people were seasick. We heard that there is a day's difference between European and New Zealand time. We should arrive on the 7th our time but in Europe it will be the 8th. So we have only 6 more nights. I'm counting the days and nights because it's always an effort to decide to go to bed in my cabin where there is a stranger sleeping in the room with me. She certainly didn't improve the trip for me. Apart from the fact that she is an obnoxious person. The last 2 days have been bitterly cold. People wear furs and winter clothes. I regret having so proudly packed all my summer clothes to take to our new home. Now I'll have to unpack everything again. We are using the last few days on board ship to find out all we can about New Zealand. We want to spend the first days on land with an English couple. These people are from England and want to settle in New Zealand; they have a small child of 1½ and want to settle in Auckland. We'll go to the hotel together and spend the first few days with them. We also met a very nice old lady [about 62] who is visiting her daughter in New Zealand for 6 months. Her daughter is picking her up by car and then they're doing a trip round the islands. The daughter lived in India with her husband for 2 years and they have now been in New Zealand for a year. He has the agency for Johnny Walker whisky. The lady's husband was a glass manufacturer and they employed Czech workers. She promised to introduce us to her daughter as she might be able to advise us. On Friday they had the usual fancy dress party on board. It was wonderful, but we weren't dressed up, though most people were. We couldn't imagine that English people would be so pleasant and gay. We must say, we've had wonderful experiences. We finished up by going to the Captain's cabin with 13 other people. It was really great fun and we forgot our troubles. Altogether I must say, it was like one big family. We feel very well and are pleased that we are not treated as intruders, rather as equals. Perhaps we are a little interesting, everyone asks questions about our homeland, people only have a vague idea.

9/10/1939

We just had 2 days of terrible storm but we weren't seasick at all. The waves were as high as a house, the ship, despite its great size was tossed around like a rocking horse. Today, on the 9th October, we arrived at our destination, happy and excited and I am writing this letter from the hotel room. We shall stay 2 to 3 days until we find a little flat. I cannot tell you how happy we are to have arrived. And so we close our report and will write more details in a few days as soon as we know more. We remain with sincere greetings and kisses,

Yours L & F - your children.

16/10/1939

Dearest Mama,

We've been here for a week now and have written you a letter. I don't know where the time has gone. Or perhaps it only seems to have gone so fast because so much is happening. Luckily on Monday we found accommodation through the paper, a lovely place, a big room, and a smaller room for sleeping. We'll leave the 2 single beds in there and put the 2 mattresses together, and a small kitchen. There are very few brick houses here, most are built of hard wood and very comfortable. They are called bungalows. All the houses have cold and hot water and a big open fire. There is no entrance hall, you come straight in from the garden (every home has a garden) into a room called a porch. The nicer this room, the more expensive the house. What strikes you most here, is the vegetation. You see beautiful palm trees, like in Italy, lemon trees line the streets. There are the most beautiful flowers in well-tended borders. We are living in one of the best areas (Parnell). Without even realising it, we took this flat. It is quite expensive, but so is everything here. We have a view on 3 sides, on one side right to the sea. The climate at present is like it is in May at home, up till last week it rained every day, that's winter here. The nights are so cool that you wear furs. Only our featherbeds save us from having to take the so-called well-loved hotwater bottle to bed. When we first arrived we wrote to friends of Marianne's and Mr. Perl. Both contacted us immediately. It's not surprising that Marianne's friends were nice to us but Perl's even exceeded all our expectations. On the same day we got in touch with us he invited us to his place. He is about 42, his wife about 38, a daughter of 15. We were there for afternoon tea and dinner, tomorrow I'm going to watch her make bread, stay for lunch and then they are coming to our place for afternoon tea and dinner. Since we met them we see them every day. They introduce us to people and take us to meet them. He and his brother want to give up their jobs and set up as farmers- something that we are also advised to do. Farming here is quite different to what we imagined at home, much easier. Mr. Perl wants to introduce us to a farmer with whom we could spend several weeks learning and then we could buy a dairy farm for ourselves. But we are a long way from a definite decision. Everyone gives us different advice. We want to look around for a couple of weeks and then begin doing something. All the farms have electricity, the cows are milked by electric milking machine, the milk is collected daily and taken to town, everything is arranged by the government. Franz is considering working as a labourer. They are well paid here. People tell us you need about Kr2,000 to have a good standard of living and that is what a labourer can earn. Many people here have cars, they even drive to work. All this is only hearsay. As far as they locals are concerned, you only hear the best reports. They are all very friendly and forthcoming. There are about 150 people who came the same way as we did. We all think of bringing our relatives out here, as soon as possible. First of all we hope that Marianne will come out. We'll try everything possible to make it happen. It's very sad for us to have received absolutely no mail. Hopefully you got our telegram to Otto. We are sorry that we didn't bring our things with us, we could have used them here. Glass and china are very expensive, but meat costs almost nothing. It only costs double the price of potatoes. Today I bought myself a coffee set, usually I buy from the cheapest stores. Marianne's friends have already bought a house, they are having the furniture made and then they want to buy a car. And that's how it is for everyone. Anyone who wants to work, can find work - that's the most important thing in a country. Everyone here is content and that makes us approach the future in a positive frame of mind. We can't write anything more about our situation. We can hardly believe we're here - even Mr. Perl is amazed that we made it. Of course we are thinking of you all. Everything seems more difficult from over there than it is here. You can't believe it's difficult for anyone to get into a country like this. If it remains the way it seems to be now, we will be very happy. The only thing people complain about is the quiet. Funny, isn't it? MY love and kisses,

(Written by Lizzie)

17/11/1939

Dear parents and Mama,
Yesterday we received from Rudy (Broll, a cousin in England), the mail which he collected. Amongst the mail was a postcard of 3rd September and a letter posted on 1st September, a letter of 21st September from Rosl Fried from which we realised that up to this point you didn't even know we'd left. We hope that Ernst Lachs told you and that you got the telegram we sent from here. (Ernst Lachs was another cousin).. We can't describe how happy we are to have received a sign of life from you. We hear that soon there will be a direct mail exchange by air with the place where Robert and Stascha (Briess) are. (Sydney). That would be great. We also got a letter from Rudy Broll (a cousin) from which we learned that you asked dear Ernst for news of us. We got your papers and now it is midday and Mr. Perl is coming to visit us - he's coming past our house, immediately we invited him for lunch. We're having rump steak and then chocolate squares which are left over from yesterday's visitors. You always have to have something in the house, because people visit continuously. Hopefully it'll still be like that on the farm. Mr. Perl wants to buy a farm in the neighbourhood as his sister-in-law and family are finally arriving here in the next few days and they want to work the farm together. The negotiations over our farm should be finalised over the next week. We have seen 2 farms which we like and we'll get whichever one is the better buy. The custom here is to pay a small deposit and pay off the rest over 45 years, in small instalments to the Government. Earnings from farms here are really particularly good, because most of the population are farmers. We were also very pleased to receive your letter Mama Adi because it contained hopes that we all have these days, that we should all be together again as we used to be. We are very pleased to have discovered the possibility that we might be able to help Otto and Marianne and the thought that we might be together again is so wonderful. At present that is our next goal. If they can't come right away the possibility is always there that everything will be ready to go ahead once there is peace again and there will be no holdups. Once we're on the farm we'll get another picture of things so that we'll be able to describe it to you. Of course the whole undertaking is a colossal change - but when you see that former furriers, wholesalers, and other people adapt to the different circumstances, then it doesn't seem so impossible.

Kisses from your,

(written by Lizzie)

November 1939?

Dearest Mama,

I hope that you received the letter we wrote Frank's dear parents last week. It's very expensive to send mail, so we decided to write one week to Frank's parents and the next week to you. We can only write the same things and with the length of time it takes the mail these days, 2 or 3 days more makes little difference. We haven't yet received a letter from you here. However, as other people are receiving mail, we take it that you also have mail from us. This is very important for us. Actually we expected a telegraphed reply to our cable, though you apparently didn't think it was worthwhile. It causes us many headaches. I don't know what to write about first. All our thoughts are concentrated on our getting settled in. As we already wrote in our last letter, we hope to go dairy farming. We often go looking at farms now to get an idea of what's involved. We want to buy a farm fairly soon, as conditions are favourable at present. It is quite difficult to write about these things and we are sure you will find our activities hard to understand. We realise now why we could discover so little about this country - it's difficult to describe in words what people are like here and how we feel. We don't feel as if we are amongst strangers. We already know many local people and are invited all over the place. Every evening we are in the company of different people and if we happen to be home one evening our neighbours invite us over for a game of cards. They are quite old, but very nice. By going to look at farms we have got to know much of the countryside. The Agent takes us everywhere by car. The district is really uniquely beautiful, everything exceptionally well cared for, unlike anything we know at home. We are often open-mouthed, eyes popping. The bungalows are just like the ones in town, the only difference is that there, everything is run on electricity, whereas here, you cook on gas. These little houses have up to 10 rooms, but none fewer than 3. One thing we noticed here, is that when you are invited out for the evening, only sweets are served at first, and then only at 10p.m., quite a big supper is served. That's what we would call it. There is so much on the table that you are worried that the table will bend under the weight. Between 10 and 11 when all the food has been eaten, you go home. These evenings are always very pleasant. You might play cards - usually 15-20 people are invited. You always invite that many, as there is just as much work involved as if you invited fewer people. In the circle there are also doctors so that you know whom to contact if you're feeling off colour. You meet quite big families here and then I always think of you, how hard it must be for you. All different ages, these people and how fit they all seem. As soon as we have the farm we will request permission for Marianne to come and hopefully it will be possible. In any case it is more possible to get someone in with our being farmers. If only we had got that far! From our letters you can see our general frame of mind. Nevertheless we want to reiterate again how happy we are here, how well-disposed everyone is to us and how good that makes us feel. We feel like real people again. We still have many problems, certainly, but these are nothing compared to the problems we had between March and August. As we stressed above, we are busy putting all our energies into looking at farms. We can pick the difference between bush and the different kinds of farm animals. Mostly it annoys us that we didn't bring our furniture, because we could've used it all here. People bring their things with them without any problems. Electric stove, electric washing machine, wringer, iron, frig, vacuum cleaner, sewing machine, chests of drawers. You have to be quite differently equipped on the farm to the way we were at home, lots of woollen clothes, pants (for women too) high boots made of rubber. Electric ovens are best because they give off as much heat as an open fire. You should always buy the best quality. Lizzie went shopping so I'm writing a few more lines. I'm studying all possible books and magazines, anything that is at all related to farming, because it's useful to know not just the practical side but the theory as well. We will get advice from whomever we can, which we will consider because we have to be quite careful, being novices. Once we've got the Permit for you, we'll send a long list of things for you to bring with you. You must get everything down to the smallest item. Everyone who doesn't do this regrets it once they're here. We intend to furnish a bedroom and living room (with second-hand furniture).

Hugs and kisses, Your
Lizzie and Franz.

10/11/1939

Dearest Mama,

As we are writing to a friend from our trip, we don't want to miss an opportunity of sending a sign of life to you. The news is all the same at the moment, from us. We are very busy with our plans. Every day we go to check out different farms. We think that in a month we will be at the stage of settling on one. The day before yesterday we saw one we liked, but we must keep looking, to be sure we get the best proposition. We always think of you and Marianne and have many other prerequisites which it would be pointless to elaborate on as you wouldn't understand. What might interest you is that to begin with we want to milk 35-40 cows, later when we're used to the work, up to 65. For a family of 3 to have a good standard of living and a little over, they estimate you need to be milking 25 cows. You have to get up early, between 6 and 7 am and by 9 you've finished the milking and cleaning the machines. Usually the men do the milking and the women look after the poultry. There are very few geese here and the goose meat isn't very good. So there are really many different things to tell you about. You can see from these little things how altogether different life is here. This example will show you how pleasant it is to do business here.

Mr. Perl introduces Franz to a gentleman who has the same profession as Otto Stransky (insurance). Everyone does business with him so Franz followed their example. There is a certain insurance for old age. A few days later the man passed our street and visited us without an invitation with this wife. We were just having dinner, they watched us, then took us to their place where we met the father and 2 brothers (lawyer and leather merchant). The father is 86 years old, plays wonderful bridge, and has been here for 53 years. They are from Lapland. The wife is an organiser for WIZO and I have also joined. People are very energetic here and do a lot. Tonight we're invited to their sister's house. She is from one of the best families here. We are being taken around a lot - people give us advice and we feel very content. Everyone speaks English and a dialect which is hard to understand but is similar to ours. I hope you know what I mean. So that you can see how well we are getting on: today's lunch Naturschnitzel, cucumber salad, new potatoes and a butter cake. Still we've both lost quite a lot of weight since our departure. I weigh 62-63kg and Franz 81-82kg. Many kisses from us,

Your

(Written by Lizzie)

28/11/1939

dear Martuscka and all our dear ones,

Our news for this week has a particularly happy note because we received the first mail of 26th October from Dr. Herzog. You can't imagine how happy the letter made us, to know that you are well and especially the news of Marianne. Now we only hope that she arrived as arranged. At the same time we telegraphed Rudi (Broll, Lizzie's cousin) about her address so that we could establish contact to help them get here. It would be so wonderful if we could be here together. If you agree, it wouldn't be long before it would be possible. One thing, we are sure of that you would love it here, but we don't want to talk you into it, that would be a lot to answer for. There aren't any discontented immigrants here and that says it all. As far as our negotiations over the farm are concerned, yesterday we signed a firm offer, valid until tomorrow midday and hope that everything is now on the right track. This farm has many favourable aspects - near the city, good soil, (the main thing), near the sea, about 2km away, beautiful view, nice house and many other things. As a sign of life in the meantime you will have heard news of us from the Waweren, Rosl Fried, Rudi and Dr. Herzog to whom we write weekly. You can't have received the last cards that we posted before our departure, but we are glad that things are at least as they are, write often and in detail what's new in the family and how you and all the others are. In the meantime you will have received news of our trip and arrival. Also we couldn't write our best wishes for the (Jewish) holidays but you can imagine that we were with you in spirit and wished you all the best. You mustn't worry over what has become of us, we are in good spirits and trust in the future. Today we are not enclosing any mail as we are up to date with our correspondence and are waiting for replies. We would like Otto Loeffler's address very much and Hugo F. in San Francisco. Newspapers and news through the radio we receive in great detail, during the trip it was so seldom. Bobby will be good company for you and aunt Adele (Marta's sister with whom she was living in Brno), he's a good dog, though he won't like his muzzle very much. Do dogs in Brunn bite so much? You, my dear parents, will be anxious about Marianne's family but it will be a comfort to know that they have achieved the goal for which they strived for so long. Regarding the relations, dear Marta, from whom you hear nothing, you mustn't worry, the ones who get in touch have a reason and the ones who have no interest don't have to get in touch either. We have pleasant memories of Josef, we are sorry for his parents. Give my best regards to all our dear relations, the Bachers, the Kohlen aunts, Mintschas, Fanny, on the other side Ada, Ludwigs, Grete, Hermines and all our friends and acquaintances and we, your grateful children hug and kiss you a thousand times. What are Albergos doing? Write me some time..... Frank has already written whatever's interesting. I know no words to express what we felt when we saw the letter and read the contents. If only we can have Marianne's address soon then we can come to an arrangement with them. Then Frank would go straightaway to the place where they process the permits (16 hours away from here) and discuss it personally. It would be best if they came here but it would be up to them. We are very happy that you have news of us and hope it will be possible to continue. We are still very content here, now we are very happy to be reaching our goal soon and can both be working properly. Yesterday we were invited for dinner at the home of some local people, today some others invited us to a concert. People whom we have known for only a short time, the next time we see them, invite us to their home. At home we could never have imagined how friendly people would be here. How good that is for us! Every evening we are somewhere else and have plans for days ahead. So, next time more, perhaps we will be farm owners by then. Many kisses,

Yours,

(Written by Lizzie.

Rosl Fried was a cousin of Adi's, Frank's stepmother.

"The parents" were Friedl and Adi, Frank's parents in Olomouc and Marta was Lizzie's mother)

Marianne was Frank's sister and Otto her husband.

22/12/1939

Dearest Mama, my dear parents,

This time we're already writing from our friends' farm. We've been here for 4 days and know what's involved in milking cows. We are happy that at least we know that we can learn it in a few weeks, with hard work and practice, so that we both can do the job in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, later on in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. We're getting up at 6 o'clock here every day, on our farm we'll get up at 5 a.m. so that we can finish in time for the milk truck to collect the milk at our door. The farm we're on at present is 10kms from our farm. Consequently we're happy to be here because by living with these people we are getting to know them and we will get good advice from them in the future. They have already been here for 5 years and have 26 relatives here. We are very content and happy and that's the main thing for us and for you. Last week we got a letter from Mulls from their first transit stop and it was very interesting. Nothing could have made us happier than to see that you are well and a weight fell off our chests. We're now trying to get permission for Isi to come here, we hope to succeed because it's not so easy where he is at present. For Mull it's easier. We're only waiting for their next declaration to submit the application. We would be very happy if it went well. You might be interested in what we had to buy for the farm. Franz has several old shirts and pants, also dungarees which he only needs for milking. He also needs a raincoat like sailors have for winter. It rains every day in winter here and in bucketfuls, unlike anything we know. Then we have high gumboots, like the ones you buy at Bata. We wear woollen socks, and shoes but only use them for milking. Just now Franz is making a ladder. I haven't told you that the family with whom we are living are an elderly couple with a 30 year old son and a 20 year old daughter-in-law. The children married young and are expecting a baby. Today we saw 11 tiny piglets being born. Of course we find all these things fascinating. Next week Franz will be helping with hay-making. That entails lots of work and the same will be waiting for us on our farm. That's all for today. Many kisses from us to all the family,

your

F.B.Royal Road,
Massey-Henderson RD
Auckland, N.Z

Auckland 18th December 1934

My dear family, (Otto & Marianne who had just left Czechoslovakia)
Just today we received your letter from Rotterdam and were very happy because it told us more of your escape and about all our dear family. What you tell us is not very encouraging. On the whole we've heard news of most people. We are in close contact with Porsolds and through them and other Czechs, we hear much news of what's going on there. We just keep hoping that it's not actually happening to our own family. As soon as we got the letter we submitted the application for Martuška and hope that it will be possible to bring her here. She has to be in a neutral country before she can get a Permit. We got your telegram last week and will submit your application as soon as possible. In Your case it should be easier because you are in a neutral country. In any case you should investigate getting started in something as we don't know how long it'll take to get the Permit. It is also very important for us to know how much capital you have and in which currency it is, and we would ask you to let us know by telegram. I assume it might not be possible for you to get money out of England - nevertheless I think the following is the correct procedure. Because you get a better price for the hard currency here, and for £100 sterling you would get about £NZ140-145 I would advise as follows: as soon as we get your Permit, we would sell your English pounds here and buy your tickets here so that the trip would be cheaper for you. Yesterday we had lots to do, moved all our things to friends in Auckland and are now living with friendly German farmers who live about 10 miles away from our farm, until the 1st January. Here we're learning the basics about farming today-I milked for the first time and will take over our farm on 1st January. Originally we were supposed to take over yesterday on the 19th, but the Vendor changed his plans and doesn't want to hand over until January 1st. We prefer this arrangement because this way we won't be taking over as complete beginners. In the enclosures we're sending you a letter on behalf of our present hosts, addressed to people from whom they haven't heard for several months. They haven't anyone who can forward mail on for them. If you get a reply from Germany please send it to us. Best wishes to you all, Yours

Lizzie and Franz

8/1/1940

All our dear family,

So we are happily settled into our farm. On the 1st of January we packed our few things and moved from our friends' farm where we spent 12 days learning. We had no beds, so we set up camp in the corner of a room. A small folding table and 2 folding chairs, that was all the furniture in the house. But all this is better now as we have borrowed beds and as we mentioned in our last letter we have borrowed various things from our friends. There is plenty of work to do. Early in the morning we start with the milking, - until we can do it in reasonable time, then we can get up later. After milking, a big breakfast and then we start the rest of the work. - repairing fences, chopping up thistles, fixing machines and many, many other things which I can't describe. The most important job at the moment is to bring in the hay for the winter. We have about 50,000 quadrat meters fenced off for the hay, one third we closed off before (with the lawnmower) and the rest we cut in 3 days. It takes the grass about 2-3 days to dry and it is collected in small stacks by the machine. Next the machine comes. It looks like a gate, pulled on both sides by horses - it takes 15-20 such little stacks at a time, bringing them to a certain place where the big haystack is made. We have very good grass and hope to have about 30 tons of hay. As far as labourers are concerned, there are always a group of neighbours (6-8) who help each other, so that it doesn't cost anyone anything. Because we are beginners, and most of the neighbours have finished haymaking, except the one whom I helped today, a party of 4-5 men of our friends the ones on whose farm we stayed for the 12 days. As well as these, a neighbour, the former owner of our farm who is staying here till the end of the month, and me. Yesterday we had lots of washing and the sheets off 6 beds that we didn't get round to doing with all the shifting round. Every evening we are terribly tired, from doing work which we are not used to and also our hands have to get used to the work; then things will be better. For the present our hands hurt awfully, but these are teething problems over which we won't grow grey hairs, we'll overcome them. The previous owners of our farm who are here with us are very nice and also the neighbours whom we have got to know, give us their help and advice. In describing the above work I forgot to mention that in the morning, midday and evening the pigs have to be fed. Inbetween we bought 4 pigs, because we have superfluous skimmilk. In the evenings we go to bed as soon as possible, firstly because we're always tired and also so we can be fit for the following day. We had a letter from Mulls dated 20th October, from Rotterdam, about 14 days to 2 weeks ago and now await further mail from them. Then we will begin proceedings so that they can come here. My wife does wonderfully well in farmwork as in housework and the work suits us well. We are already as suntanned as negroes. We are regularly in touch with Dr. Herzog, you write to him whatever you are doing. I haven't heard for a long time from my friend Tony, whom you perhaps know. When mentioning about the animals, I forgot to say that today, I got a pain which makes walking difficult for me, so I hope that by Thursday's haymaking it will have gone. So and now we want to have a bath and then quickly get into our feather beds. Lots of hugs and thousands of kisses from your children,

Franz

(Dr. Herzog was a go-between for mail in London, as most of the mail written to Czechoslovakia doesn't seem to have got through directly from N.Z. By then England and N.Z. were at war with Germany and Czechoslovakia was under German occupation)

9/1/1940

Yesterday we wrote you the enclosed letter but today we got a letter from you and from our parents saying " we are very surprised that Fralis*don't write because since they are settled in one place they promised to write regularly once a week and they promised to write to you too, because they know how much everyone waits for news in these times. Hopefully they made up for it in the last month. If the next report is the same, that they don't write, we'll tell Fralis they must send a detailed telegram." We got your letter today, from which we could see that you're well and we thank you. When we hear such a lot, we can't imagine what it's like, we're too far away from it all. We're striving for a goal and hope to achieve it with God's help.

Since the first, we're earning, there's a certain advantage in being on the farm right now, as from now till March are the good months, after that, it falls off a bit because the cows calve and so give less milk.

As Franz wrote yesterday, we really enjoy life on the farm, we're still only half an hour from the centre of town. All beginnings are difficult and we have yet to get used to the new work. It would be a big advantage for us to have had another woman on the farm to take care of the administration. So between milking and housework, I'm very busy. We get back from milking about 8a.m. and then I have to get breakfast, tidy up, cook lunch, sew and do the baking and such other housework. In the evening we milk again then eat dinner and go to sleep. You can see it's a life full of changes. The farm as such, is wonderfully laid out. From the milking shed we can see the sea and every ship that arrives, hopefully with our mail. In the evening we can see the city lights. It's like it is in Fiume when you see it from Abbazia.

We hear you were in Prague, in sad circumstances, with Auntie, you'll have reminisced about your student years. Time rushes on very quickly. We heard from Ernst about Mela, it must be terrible for Ernst to sit there and not be able to help. It's the same for everyone. We're so content here and wish that you could see us, how well we look, Thank God, and now good the hard work is for us. We're expecting a letter from Mull at the end of January - hopefully they are well. Anyway. now I'm going to bed and wish you all good night.

*Fralis: Frank and Lizzie.

Letter from Lizzie to Marianne and Otto.

10/1/1940

Yesterday we wrote the enclosed letter, but today we heard from you, Vera and also from our dear parents. We are very disappointed that Fralis don't write, since they promised to write regularly once a week since they have been settled in one place and they know how people wait for news in these times. Hopefully the letters from relations in the last month will make up for it. If the next news is the same, that they don't write, we will write to Fralis to send a detailed telegram. When we got your latest letter from which we could see that things are going well for you, we were both happy for you. Even when you hear a lot, you still have no idea - we are far from it all. We only pursue a goal and hope with God's help to achieve it. Since the first, we're also earning and it's a certain advantage that we are at this time on the farm, because from now till March are the good months, then it slacks off a bit because the cows are calving and so there is less milk. As Franz wrote yesterday, we love the life on the farm, we only have a half hour drive to get to the centre of the city. All beginnings are difficult and we have to get used to the new work. It would be a great help to us if we had another woman on the farm, to take care of the housework. So between the milking and housework I'm very busy. We come in from milking at 8 o'clock, then I have to make breakfast, clean up, cook lunch, do the mending, washing and other housework. In the evening we milk again then eat dinner and go to sleep. You can see our life is full of diversions. The farm is wonderfully situated. From the milkshed we can see the water and every ship that arrives and hopefully brings mail for us. In the evenings we see the city lights. It looks like it does in Fiume, when you look over from Abbazia.

I hear you were in Prag. A sad reunion now, with aunty, you will have remembered your student days. Time passes very quickly at the moment. We heard from Ernst about Mela, it must be terrible for Ernst to sit there and not be able to help. For all of us it is like that. We are so content here and wish you could see us, how healthy (Thank God) we look and how the hard work suits us.

We are expecting a letter from Mull at the end of January, hopefully they are well. Now I'm going to sleep and wish you all goodnight. Today I'm already quite tired. We are always thinking of you -

Yours grateful children.

10/1/1940

My dearest family,
So we received your letter and were very pleased to hear from you again after such a long time. We also had several letters from Olmütz and dear Mama (Marta, Lizzie's mother) saying nothing other than that they are well, Thank God. A letter via Sweden takes 4 weeks from there, although sent by airmail. We write regularly since our arrival, one week to Olmütz (Franz's parents) the next to Brönn (Lizzie's mother). To get dear Mama here is a weak hope at the moment, as you can only get permits for people who are in England or in a neutral country. Perhaps we'll be lucky and we will not rest until we have Mama here. We will also apply for a permit for Marianne, but we need evidence of good character that they sent to us in London. We have already telegraphed them from here and calculate that they will send the documents on the next ship. Further news from us - We followed our announced plan, have already bought a farm and since January 1st are legal owners. The farm is 66 acres (4,000 sq.m.), 32 milking cows, 7 heifers, 5 calves, 11 pigs, 2 horses, 1 dog that brings in the cows for milking, hens and ducks. We have a lovely house, 5 rooms and electric kitchen, also an electric milking machine and hot and cold water. The farm is 25 minutes away from Auckland. First we were at a friend's farm where we learned to milk (The friend was 10 minutes away) from our farm) and now the previous owner is still on the farm to teach us. The learning is not difficult, only we are very tired in the evenings, firstly because we get up at 5 a.m. every day and secondly because we're not used to the work yet. We are very happy and don't need anything more. Above all, life is healthy and it is satisfying to work with nature. We like it here very much, we can't imagine anything better and we believe we make a good advance guard for the family. People here are all very nice, we feel as if we'd always lived here. The standard of living is very high here, everyone is happy. At present summer is beginning and we are expecting weeks without rain. In December it rained a lot, as if out of a bucket. We are only furnishing 2 rooms, the others we rent to other immigrants. We have a fridge, a radio and a vacuum cleaner, the latter lent to us, even some Persian carpets. For today, best greetings.

Yours Frädis

Did you get £100 from Cooks?

10/1/1940

My dear family,

We are longing for your letter with the documents. Today we got your documents from Rudolf Broll in London. Unfortunately they are not complete enough, as the character reference which we need here, is missing. Sometimes a confirmation by the Jewish Community Office, translated into English is enough. We hope to receive your documents in order on the 19th. On that day the ship arrives from America. Yesterday we got a letter from our parents written on the 10th October and from Martuska written on the 2nd December. They are only signs of life, there is nothing to write. We hope that they will now have mail regularly from us, we write once a week. We are enclosing a letter which we would ask you to send on. Today we also got a card from Jaque Groag, but he doesn't write anything about what he hears from Olmütz. In London they don't know any more than we do here, it's all very sad.

From us, we can only report that we are happy on our farm. For the first while there is an awful lot to do and it would be good for us if you were here already. From our letter to our parents, you can see how we are. We live worse than gypsies, but what can we do? All beginnings are difficult. In the house there are always 8 people around, it's such a big family who are staying with us till the 1st of February. We need them badly in these first few weeks and I think we'll take on a boy to help with the milking when they leave. It wouldn't cost us so much and would help us a lot. It would only be for the next 2 months because then the season ends, then things slacken off and we can handle it ourselves. But none of this is definite. By and large we have fitted in well and we like it very much. We are making wonderful plans for you if you were only here already. Rudy Broll couldn't send us a Bank withdrawal for you unfortunately, which is a shame, but we will declare it here. In any case, if you didn't receive the money in America, it's possible that you will get it from London, transferred via here - From Brünn we hear that you have a job already, that's good in any case, even if it's not the right one. Write often and to all 3 of you, for today our heartfelt greetings and kisses from

Your Fralis

Letter to Marianne, Franz's sister and Husband Otto and daughter Marianne, who left Czechoslovakia and went to America. Otto is sometimes referred to as "Mulls".

Fralis = Franz and Lizzie

17/1/1940

Royal Rd., Henderson, R.D.

My dears,

We're writing because as of the 19th of this month we have been informed that we are not allowed to correspond with certain enemy countries. So our parents haven't heard from us since November. You can imagine how we felt. We won't write directly to them anymore, and ask you please to forward letters for us now and again so they know we are well. We have written to you in previous letters that we have bought a farm near Auckland. So it's up to you to let them know how we are getting on. We will write to you regularly each week. In the meantime we wrote but th letter must've suffered the same fate as all the others, also another letter which was enclosed. From the 19th to 31st last month we were staying with friends where we learned the basics of milking. It's quite slow, not easy work, especially not at his time because the hay is made for winter and all the neighbours help one another, it is does not cost anyone anything to bring in labour. Since the 1st we've been on our farm and are very happy with it. Till now the former owners were here but from tomorrow we're on our own. In one way we're happy to be alone at last but it would've really been better for us to have had more supervision. However, the people wanted to go, as they'd bought a house in town - we didn't want to hold them back. Our neighbours are very nice people and have promised us help in every respect. We're very pleased to be at peace at last, in our own house, though we haven't any furniture yet, in fact we have nothing, but the feeling of owning our own property. We got your documents from Mr H.Broll from London but there was no Certificate of Good Behaviour which is absolutely necessary here. We are longing for a letter from you so that we can set your application in motion. Yesterday Porsolds got the Permit for their friend in Holland. From home we hear regularly once a month, unfortunately barely signs of life, little more, but at least something. Mrs.Aufricht's father has disappeard in Poland, her mother is in Ostrau, terrible news. New Year's Eve we were at a party at Porsolds for 20 people, all friends. It was very nice. At midnight we thought of you and that hopefully next year we can celebrate in joy together. Of course everyone was reflective and we were all thinking of our families. We went home quite early.

Write soon and in full,

Yours Frali.

Our address:

Massey-Henderson 18/1/1940

Francis Briess, Royal Road, Massey-Henderson R.D.

My dearest,

On the 15th of last month we received your first letter and on the 30th, the second. We thought we could write via neutral countries to our parents, however, yesterday we had returned by the same mail all the letters we had written since November, with the comment that until further notice we could not correspond either directly or indirectly with alien countries. If you write to Marta please tell her this. Please write to her also that we are well and are content. We are surprised that you didn't send the documents e.g. Document of Good Behaviour, Medical Reports from the family = we also requested 4 x 6cm photos of the child (Marietta). We enclose also the application which you, dear Ernst must sign between the crosses. Send the mail airmail as it takes only 3 to 4 weeks to arrive here. There is a possibility that you might get the Permit because Ernst has a good occupation. His citizenship doesn't make any difference as long as you are in a neutral country. It is annoying with my poor mother - we applied for her a month ago, but it seems to be pretty hopeless because you can't even get in touch with her. Frank's sister left Czechoslovakia on 19th October and is now in America. They also want to come here because we need them badly. We have bought a farm with 32 cows, 11 pigs and 2 horses and chickens. The farm is 25 minutes from Auckland, the biggest city in New Zealand but the capital is Wellington because it is situated between the two islands. To bring my mother to Switzerland we would pay any expenses, would it be possible? Perhaps it could be done through some committee. We would eventually send the Permit to the committee, as a guarantee that she that she would continue her journey and not stay in Switzerland.

Otherwise, there are on the farm, one and two year old cows, altogether 45. The farm is 1 acre - 4,000 sq.m. We also have a lovely house with 5 rooms, bathroom and kitchen. Everything electric, even the frig. So, as you can see we're doing really well. Today we had an upset, as the previous owner is moving out and is taking everything with him, that isn't nailed down, which he's not supposed to do under the contract. Many immigrants have bought farms and because they have done well, we decided to try it too. It's certainly not easy work, we get up at 5.a.m. every day and work till late at night.

21/1/1940

My dearest family,

We received your letters of 10th December and the one of a week later at the same time, together with 3 letters with documents. Franz has prepared a long letter in reply, but was so busy he didn't get around to finishing it, so I will take over as I want to answer you right away. We hope that you got the 3 or 4 letters that we sent you care of Gutman and that you are in the picture and also Adi and Marta know about it. We were very pleased with the news especially that you have the possibility of earning some money. Now concerning the Permit. Immediately after the letter from Rotterdam we applied for Marta, however there is almost no hope for a positive result as she's not in a neutral or English speaking country. We only want to wait for the reply and then will immediately apply for you. We are expecting the reply within the next few days. Then we really will arrange for the Chilean visa for her. Enquire further about it anyway. Her dates: Marta Löwy, born 22nd April 1888 in Val Mezirici under the jurisdiction of Ung. Brod, Widow. We can send the documents as long as they are returned to us here. We were of course, delighted with the letter from our parents, if only they would hear from us as well. Your various questions are completely covered as we answered them in our letters. We will write to London about the Stopford fund, perhaps we will hear something more detailed. It would be wonderful if you got that. Unfortunately we have had very bad experiences with the Czechs here so that they will only believe it if they have a statement from London, that the money is deposited there in your name. It is unfortunate that Broll deposited the money in his name, so he is not sending any statements. In spite of this we don't doubt for a minute that we will get the Permit for you. As you are earning money, the waiting is not so terrible. At the beginning, Passports are quite unimportant, so don't worry. As far as we have heard there is no B'nei Brith here. In the whole of N.Z. there are about 3,000 Jews, in Auckland perhaps 400-500. People are very nice and obliging. They have big businesses in hand. Auckland and even other cities have Jewish mayors. The mayor of Auckland is even a "sir" and is already serving a second term. The prospects here are not bad; the country is developing. There is no prejudice against immigrants generally speaking, most of whom have a good reputation and are also very fine people. Everyone is very happy here and above all feels free. To describe a typical type - We moved to our farm, introduced ourselves to our neighbours and became friends immediately. That is, they bring us some of their vegetables, fruit, small gifts and tokens that give us pleasure. Our neighbour is especially helpful as he knows that we are amateurs so he helps us with the milking and is generally more on our farm, than his own. Besides, the farm belonged to him before he sold it to the man from whom we bought it. Today we finished haymaking. That's a big thing for a farmer. At our farm we had 8 able-bodied men working for 3 days. Unfortunately it was not good weather and so the whole thing was dragged out to over 14 days. We had a lot to buy because our predecessors didn't put much into the farm. There is a lovely house, although the other things are much neglected. In 2 years we hope to have progressed to the point where the farm has all new machinery and the administration runs smoothly. Until then we have to experience things first hand. It is so wonderful that we can create something again. Today I think I have gossiped enough. Yesterday we got a letter from Robert (Briess, a cousin of Frank's in Sydney), and he's fine. He earns £6 per week. They live in Sydney as he has the factory there. It seems he is also not on good terms with Hans. He wants to establish an import export business in London. The Australian authorities refused his permit at first because he couldn't speak English, until they persuaded the officials in Australia House in London. We are quite happy with our English. Franz speaks very well already and writes fluent letters. I converse, but nevertheless.....

Henderson 9. 2.1940

My dear family,

Don't get a fright over the writing paper, we're not travelling, it's just left over from our trip and so we're using it up. We have so often begun to write to you and then not sent the letter, so that by the time we got to sending the letter, the contents always changed completely. All the mail goes to you only once a month and so we're proposing to write weekly and send the letters together. We got your news by telegram, though it didn't mean much to us.

It seems that you didn't understand our telegram. We can't do anything at all while Marta is with Gretl. By the time you receive this letter you will have heard something different again. We must be very patient about everything. As far as our present life is concerned, we are very lucky and contented. We love our life here on the farm more and more every day. Now we're starting to organise things according to our taste. Most importantly, we're now on city water supply. Up till now we've only had tank water and only drink rainwater, which we had to use sparingly. Frank laid the pipes and just today we used them for the first time. Next month we want to have an electric stove and hotwater boiler installed, paying them off over 3 years. We've already written to you about the house once before. It was built 3 years ago and has 5 rooms, laundry, W.C., toilet, 2 bedrooms, besides bathroom and kitchen. At present I'm putting everything in order, doing the floors, laying linoleum in the kitchen and also carpets. You do everything yourself here, and you realise just how much you are able to do. We have ordered furniture for 2 rooms, that is to be the same as our others were, only smaller. Although I ^{do} miss certain things, which I could have sent in a container we've decided not to ^{do} that now. (If Marta follows us out here perhaps she could bring a couple of cases with her). We've got a frig, radio, a lovely car (Morris 12), everything bought second hand, but in very good condition. Slowly we're buying everything we need and will continue, especially if the yield of the farm continues as it is at present. In January we earned £62. Ofcourse we've got a lot of improvements to make as the previous owner of the farm didn't want to put money into it. There's also lots of work to do, but we hope to have a model little farm within 2 years. We have a lovely neighbour who helps us, which is not out of the ordinary, as neighbours are prepared to help each other in everything and are very close. In the last week we bought 11 pigs, so that altogether we have 22 animals. When we have built a proper stall, in a month or so, we'll buy 4 sows and breed piglets. Here they feed the pigs on skimmilk. The cows' milk is put through a machine which separates it into butterfat, cream and skimmilk. The foremost goes to the factory, where it is made into butter, delivered, and the pigs and poultry are fed on the skimmilk. You can count on 1 sow to be fed by the milk from cows. Next week we're selling both our horses, and with the proceeds were going to have a tractor converted from an old truck. I'll continue telling you about it for a bit longer so tha you can imagine it in your mind. It's not easy work, but fulfilling and we like it very much. You know what is nissing to make our happiness complete but hopefully our deepest wish will soon be fulfilled..

Today we received a letter from Robert. They're quite well also, they intend to rent a house soon. He sent us a letter from Erich Briess as well, in which he enquires about the possibilities of immigrating here. Would you please tell him he should get application forms from the N.Z. representative in New York, complete and sign them and have his signature witnessed and send them to us. He should answer the other questions on the form, on a separate piece of paper and send it to us, and then we'll fill out the lot for him and send them off! We can get his application going once Marta and you are here. As for ways of earning a living, we can only say that they will be better off here, than anywhere else in the world, though everywhere there is suffering because of the war. Just now, we got a letter from Franz's mother-in-law dated 7th December. She was quite happy as she had had a letter from us. Above all, she is positive and that is the main thing. We assume you are in correspondence with them all and know exactly what's going on. We don't see Porsolts much. Mrs Stein had a very good job which she lost quite suddenly. Reason unknown. She was the manager of a cosmetics laboratory. I think this is enough for today. We're looking forward greatly to receiving your news on

the ship that arrives on the 16th. We hope you are well, and that you are as happy as we are. Lots of kisses to all of you,

Your

Franz and Lizzie

We'll send photos next time.

P.S. Just now I've fed all the pigs, had lunch and am writing this letter. Best regards to you all, greetings to Hahns and Brachs,

Your

Franz.

My dear family,

We have just received another letter from you and thank you heartily. You don't mention having received any letters from us, so we take it that they went astray. We sent you a letter with an application form enclosed. All you had to do was sign it, although the signature had to be witnessed you would have to fill out the details on the blank piece of paper and send it to us. We wanted to submit it for you right away. We're sending you the form again today. Try to send it back by airmail, because the mail takes 2 months. We received the Permit for your Aunt, dear Ernst, but first she has to get to you. That makes her situation much more difficult, nevertheless we hope she will soon be in Milano. Of course we have a big problem. You wanted to know about employment opportunities here. It is certainly not easy but nevertheless we are convinced that it's the best place to be, wherever you might consider going. We are in correspondence with different people and so far haven't heard anything encouraging. We're already doing quite well! Thank God, we are very content. We've bought a farm with 32 cows, 22 pigs, horses, poultry and other farm animals. We work really hard, get up at 5 a.m. to milk the cows and finish at 8 p.m., but we're earning money already (the first month we were on the farm we made £70). At present it's the height of the season, of course. There are months when you earn very little, just enough to live on. We also have many outgoings. There is a 5 roomed house on the farm that we're only furnishing partly. We have an electric stove, hot water boiler for the bath, frig, radio, and a small car. We bought everything second hand but in good condition. A car is no luxury here (N.Z. is a country where every 6th person has a car) and you need it on the farm, otherwise you can't get around. We are barely 25 minutes away from Auckland. In any case, if you came here you would have somewhere to come and you needn't be in a rush to start work. We want to bring out Franz's sister and her family who are at present in New Jersey, as soon as possible, however first we have to settle the question of Mama (Marta). Above all, at least we have a home for the first time since we left and we would be happy if only we had you all here. We feel so happy and content here that we wish the same for everyone else. We hope this letter reaches you and thank you once again for your friendliness. Many greetings from both of us.

Yours

Letter written by Lizzie to her cousin Ernst Lachs who appears to have been in Milano at the time. After the war he went back and lived in Vienna.

22/2/1940

My dear family,

We have a bad conscience that you haven't heard from us. We wrote two letters that didn't reach you and were returned to us. That was last month and the beginning of this one and it always takes a while before we sit down again to write. We now correspond only with Marianne, who we know is in Paterson. I don't know where to begin so as not to leave anything out. We have bought a 66 acre farm near Auckland (25 minutes) and are already working here since 1st January. The animals are as follows: - 33 cows, 6 calves who will calve in the next 6 months, 22 pigs, 2 horses which we will sell as we intend to buy a small tractor and poultry and also some small calves that we will rear. Before we came to our farm we were on some friends' farm and they taught us the basics. I think we wrote to you that we want to run a dairy farm. Next season which here runs from September to March approximately, it depends a lot on the weather, we want to milk 45 cows and keep about 50 pigs. Of course we milk with a milking machine. We are quite alone on the farm. At first the previous owner was with us and now the neighbour helps with advice and practical physical help. In the short time we have already done everything we could. You only deliver cream to the factory to make butter. We've earned approx. £70. Yesterday we sold some pigs which will bring about £10, as well as these we'll sell eggs later, as they are very expensive here, now you pay 2/2 a dozen in town. Of course it's a lot of work. We get up every day at 5 a.m. and collapse into bed at 9 p.m. From 1st March we have arranged that the cream truck that picks up the cream comes at 10 o'clock instead of 8 o'clock, so that we can get up at 7 a.m. Otherwise we have arranged our lives very well, we have all we could wish for. Once a week we go to Auckland to attend to shopping. We have a little car that we need to get around the farm. (Morris 12) and for going to the various markets, to buy cattle, wood and other important things, radio, frig.,. All this sounds as if we were bragging. Of course we buy everything second hand, but through a friend, so everything is in good order. The house has 5 rooms. Bathroom, electric stove, electric hot water all day and besides that we are now on the city water supply. (Otherwise farms use tanks, to collect the rainwater). We installed that ourselves. We are having our furniture made from the pictures I still have of the furniture at home, only adapted to our circumstances here. Next week it should be ready. As you can see from this report we have quickly settled in and feel very lucky. We hope that we will get the Permit for Mama now. Then we will apply for Frank's sister as we will need help on the farm. We will be very pleased when these problems have been overcome. Otherwise everything is fine we feel so good and above all, happy, that we are already settled somewhere and can help our people. We don't mind the work, the main thing is that we achieve something. Never do we regret having left and we hope that we never get to the stage where we regret it. We like farm life very much especially as we are so close to the city, and can have visitors every Sunday. Then people bring food with them, help clean up and altogether it is very cosy. We already have some really good friends here and are especially friendly with a dentist from Berlin. He is also our guest during the week. In other words we are well satisfied and now we know too why we struggled so hard to come to such a wonderful country. Once again, please don't be cross over the delay and again thank you for the documents. Give our regards to all our loved ones, Suse and her parents, Kurt, Hela, and your sister-in-law,

Yours Lizzie

Letter home to Czechoslovakia.

Henderson 29/2/1940

My dear Family,

Yesterday we received your latest letter of 17th January. We are very surprised that you have had absolutely no mail from us. We write regularly, also because you are the only ones who know what is happening to Adi, Friedl etc. Otherwise we only write to Robert and Stascha at high holiday time. We also got your telegram today; it was difficult to understand, not clearly telegraphed and was probably delayed for that reason. Please telegraph, so that the message is easily understood, let a local person send it, so that there is no delay. We don't live in ordinary times and you have to take that into consideration. Soon we hope to have the Permit for dear Mama, you can imagine how impatient we are. It occurs to me now that we went the first detailed letter addressed to Herr Gutmann, perhaps he didn't forward it?

As for ourselves we can only report that we are fine, lacking nothing. We have everything we could want, except that we wish that you were all with us already. This week we got our furniture. It has been made according to the pictures of the furniture we had at home. Of course you can't compare it, as we wanted it all as cheaply as possible, but it satisfies us and I must say I think I was even happier when I got it this time, than the first time at home. Because of the arrival of the furniture I was very "busy", I put away the wash boxes. Next week we get our bed and the curtains which are being altered to suit the house. Everything is really to our liking. We are so happy in this country and often remark that it is a recompense for surviving all the struggles to get here. I enclose 2 photos of the milking shed and of our "car". Next time come the pictures of the "Boss" (sir). This time I mucked them up.

Now something more about our farm. We saw the first calf being born last week, however, we've already sold it to the slaughterhouse. Further, we sold some pigs and then bought some more so that we now have 26 pigs. From tomorrow we can get up an hour later as we have contracted another cream carrier to collect the cream, but we don't know yet how it will work out. We are hoping! It doesn't depend on us alone. From your letter we can see that you have settled in well. Hopefully Otto's work situation will improve soon. We'll give Porsolds all the messages. We speak to each other on the telephone mostly.

How is Marietta getting on at school? She will have missed a lot, hopefully she is quite well again. It's not bad, once she's over this illness, then it won't recur. So for today, our love and kisses to all 3 of you, and to all our dear ones,

Your Fralis

Written to Marianne, Otto and Marietta in America, by Lizzie

Henderson 6 March 1940

My dearest, all three of you,
Yesterday we received with great pleasure 2 letters from you (of the 6th and 12th February as we gathered from the Post Office stamp, because, Otto, you don't like dating your letters). Most importantly because we could see that at last you know something about what we're doing and of course, also all the others. At the same time we got letters from Albergo, Rudolf Broll, Adi, Rosl Fried and Franz's mother-in-law. Enough mail for one day. We hope you'll get regular mail from us now. There was a big delay with the mail here over Christmas and New Year and so you were without news of us. We thank you very much for everything you are doing for us and are very upset that you found our telegram so hard to understand. We discuss in every letter that we have decided to get you here whatever happens. We want to apply for the Permit once we have Marta's Permit and we hope to get that in the next few days. The condition was that you have to be in a neutral country. You are in America, have a little money and we are farmers, have brought relatively large amounts of money here and our farm is big enough to support you as well, so that you're not dependent on anyone. That's the most important thing. We needed 2 guarantors but we got our Permits in the end before the guarantors had a chance to write, did you know? Everyone here has to have guarantors and it's not hard to find people who're prepared to do it. Don't worry about it. We'll give you a Certificate in the next few days which will further support your application, and hopefully we'll be able to give you positive news by the beginning of May. God, wouldn't that be wonderful! We're happy to hear that Mianka isn't working any more. It must have been strenuous for her. But you don't mind what you do, as long as you can get out of that hell. We hope that in our next letter we'll be able to tell you more about our activities, in anycase I'll describe a typical day to you. Usually the cows are already waiting in front of the milking shed and are waiting for Frank to let them in (drive them in). If they aren't there, then we have to get the dog to get them, we get him by calling "Go away back", upon which a good dog will bring the cows to the milking shed. Ours doesn't do that, because he's a bad dog and isn't used to us. His name is Mac. In the meantime I feed the hens on the way to the milking shed. Then the milking starts normally 33 cows, at present it takes us 2 hours maximum, but there are always unexpected things to deal with, a cow with swollen tits, some you have to milk by hand etc, so it takes 2½ hours. Then the washing down starts, feeding the pigs and cleaning the yard. That takes a further hour and has to be done once a day, after every milking. Then Frank goes to work - this week he built pigsties with the neighbour and I go to the house. We have breakfast in the cowshed. In the evenings I make coffee, usually enough for 2 days and warm it up in the morning. Then I tidy up the house. Once a week I do the washing. I wash everything, even the bedclothes, working clothes etc. On these days we have a cold lunch, one day I do the ironing, clean the windows and do other housework. That at home Beta (Bieta) used to do. I'm busy up to 4.p.m. There's always some sewing to do, sometimes writing to do and other jobs. Saturday and Sunday we only milk once, on these days we get both invited and uninvited guests, endless numbers of people come to our place. They bring their lunch with them, so there's no work involved for us and they do their own dishes. As you can see, it's very cosy. The day before yesterday our friend and advisor bought a farm close by for his relations, so we won't be so completely alone now. The people move in on the 14th already, you can't get bored on a farm. So far we haven't met them. We are very tired, can hardly move our hands in the mornings, they're so stiff from the work we're not used to. Frank weighs 80 kg and I, 61kg. You don't have to worry about getting fat here. You move around enough not to get fat. In the evenings we leave the shed, eat wash and go to sleep. That's the life we lead from the end of August to April, then we won't be milking twice a day and the other usual work is different. We can't describe that to you yet as we haven't experienced it, we hope that you will be able to experience it with us, God Willing. We're glad you've got a flat and it's very praiseworthy that Marietta studies so diligently. We're already talking about how Marietta will help us with the milking, it's not as hard as you imagine. Anyway my dears, we send you our fondest love and kisses. Our thoughts are always with you. Tell all our news

to Friedl and the others. Many kisses to you, sincerely from your friends
Written by Lizzie to Marianne, Otto and Marietta Stransky (Stratton)
in America.

Yesterday we received with great pleasure 2 letters from you (of the 20th and 15th February). I don't like dating your letters. Most importantly because we could also tell last you know something about what you're doing and of course, also all the others. At the same time we got letters from Alberto, Rudolf, Adolf, Adolf, Kosi Friedl and Franz's mother-in-law. Enough mail for one day. We hope you'll get regular mail from us now. There was a big delay with the mail here over Christmas and New Year and so you were without news of us. We thank you very much for everything you are doing for us and are very upset that you found our telegram so hard to understand. We discuss in every letter that we have decided to get you here whatever happens. We want to apply for the Permit once we have Alberto's Permit and we hope to get that in the next few days. The condition was that you have to be in a neutral country. You are in America, have a little money and we are farmers, have brought relatively large amounts of money here and our farm is big enough to support you as well, so that you're not dependent on anyone. That's the most important thing. We needed 2 guarantors but we got our Permits in the end before the guarantors had a chance to write, did you know? Everyone here has to have guarantors and it's not hard to find people who're prepared to do it. Don't worry about it. We'll give you a Certificate in the next few days which will further support your application, and hopefully we'll be able to give you positive news by the beginning of May. God, wouldn't that be wonderful!

We're happy to hear that Niska isn't working any more. It must have been strenuous for her. But you don't mind what you do, as long as you can get out of that hell. We hope that in our next letter we'll be able to tell you more about our activities, in any case I'll describe a typical day to you. Usually the cows are already waiting in front of the milking shed and are waiting for Frank to let them in (drive them in). If they aren't there, then we have to get the dog to get them, we get him by calling "Go away back", upon which a good dog will bring the cows to the milking shed. Our dog doesn't do that, because he's a bad dog and isn't used to us. His name is Mac. In the meantime I feed the hens on the way to the milking shed. Then the milking starts normally 33 cows, at present it takes us 2 hours maximum, but there are always unexpected things to deal with, a cow with swollen tits, some you have to milk by hand etc, so it takes 1.5 hours. The washing down starts, feeding the pigs and cleaning the yard. That takes a further hour and has to be done once a day, after every milking. Then Frank goes to work - this week he built pigsties with the neighbour and I go to the house. We have breakfast in the cowshed. In the evenings I make coffee, usually enough for 2 days and warm it up in the morning. Then I tidy up the house. Once a week I do the washing. I wash everything, even the bedclothes, working clothes etc. On these days we have a cold lunch, one day I do the ironing, clean the windows and do other housework, that at home Beta (Beta) used to do. I'm busy up to 4 p.m. There's always some sewing to do, sometimes writing to do and other jobs. Saturday and Sunday we only milk once, on these days we get both invited and uninvited guests, endless numbers of people come to our place, they bring their lunch with them, so there's no work involved for us and they do their own dishes. As you can see, it's very cosy.

The day before yesterday our friend and advisor bought a farm close by for his relations, so we won't be so completely alone now. The people move in on the 15th already, you can't get bored on a farm.

So far we haven't met them. We are very tired, can hardly move our hands in the mornings, they're so stiff from the work we're not used to. Frank weighs 80 kg and I, 60 kg. You don't have to worry about getting fat here. You move around enough not to get fat. In the evenings we leave the shed, eat wash and go to sleep. That's the life we lead from the end of August to April, then we won't be milking twice a day and the other usual work is different. We can't describe that to you yet as we haven't experienced it, we hope that you will be able to experience it with us, God willing.

We're glad you've got a flat and it's very praiseworthy that Marietta studies so diligently. We're already talking about how Marietta will help us with the milking, it's not as hard as you imagine. Anyway my dears, we send you our fondest love and kisses. Our thoughts are always with you. Tell all our news

16/3/1940

My dearest

I am just holding your letter of 24th January and I'm crying. I'm always so happy when I hear from you and we hear often through Marianne, Vera, Robert etc. Now everything is quite normal. I think we have got everything. You don't have to worry. It's a long time now since I wrote to you directly, because I had great difficulties that I couldn't overcome, hopefully it will be alright now. I think so much of you, whatever I do is always with you in my mind and for a future when we can all be together and I am convinced we will be lucky. It is so wonderful here and we are so independent. People are kind and helpful. We are poor devils and people are more prepared to help us than they would rich people. Our neighbour is on our farm more often than on his own and works for us for nothing. If we are lucky in these things, why not in other essential things. We are doing everything for Marianne, so that she'll be able to come here. We have applied for the second time as we heard through Stransky that she may be in Italy and hope to get the Permit through. It is very difficult now, pity that they didn't come to us when we were still in Europe, it would've been much easier..

You ask what furniture we have. We have had some pieces made from our photographs and the living room and bedroom are similar to what they were at home. An area for sitting, couch and chairs as at home, radio, buffet. That is how the room is arranged. Bed, vanity, linen cupboard and a little stool, bedside table,, that is the bedroom. A small room which looks out over the farm, windows on all sides, arranged with a mat and cane furniture, table and 4 armchairs, another room with writing desk, daybed, small bookshelves in so-called den or study, kitchen everything built in, frig, electric oven electric boiler for bath and kitchen and coal range. In winter we heat the room with the electric oven only. The rooms are quite small, which you can see from the furnishings. We don't think about our things at home anymore, it's just as well we didn't take anything with us. All told, with carpets, light fittings and everything else, it cost £100. Everything is made of oak, of course not the finish we had on our furniture at home. That's why it's very cheap here, where a labourer earns £18 per week if he is a qualified tradesman.

Our daily routine: we get up at 7.a.m. (hopefully it will remain like that, we don't know yet, it depends on whether the truck which takes our cream to the factory will keep on collecting it, otherwise we would have to get up an hour earlier to be in time for the other truck at 10a.m.) We finish milking and washing the milking equipment like machines, separator (the machine which separates the full cream milk into cream and skim milk). The skim milk goes down a pipe to the pigs'pen, is collected in a tub and then distributed. At the moment we have 26 pigs, of which 3 are sows. Next season, which begins in August, we want to have about 50 pigs including 6 sows. Of course we have a boar, just as we have a bull for the cows. We keep the dates meticulously when the cows are impregnated and calculate it specially so that if possible all the cows calve at the same time, then we have about 4-6 weeks rest from milking. Then Franz goes to work and I begin cleaning up and cooking. Once a week I wash the bedclothes, as you wrote in my cookbook it should be done. Do you remember that? Washing is easier here in that we have a machine that looks like a mangle on a trough and we can wring out the washing. Summer and winter you can dry the washing outside. Once a week I bake bread with sourdough and yeast and once a week I iron. Then there are sewing and other things to busy myself with. Once a week we go to town. You know we bought ourselves a car that we needed. Marianne will send you the photograph. It is bigger than ours was at home and in good condition. In the evenings at 5.p.m. we do thesecond milking. We finish a bit earlier as there's not so much to wash. In the evenings we collapse into bed. We are making goood money. The 20th is always payday. Up to now we've earned about £180 of which we owe the previous owner £30. Quite briefly I wish you all the best for your birthday. I cannot write all that I wish for you. Only be patient, it will all work out.

Many kisses,

Written by Lizzie to her mother, Marta.

Henderson 26.3.1940

My dear family,
Again it's a month since I wrote to you on the 6th and Franz wants to write very much but he really can't get round to it, so you must excuse me for assuming the role of letterwriter. In the meantime nothing much has happened. Unfortunately Marta's Permit was refused but we won't give up until we get it because they promised it to us, on the condition that she is at Gretl's. We assumed from your telegram that she was there already so we reapplied, but were still refused. We are doing some more work on it and hope to have the Permit soon, but at present we're getting nowhere. Also, we don't know Gretl's exact address. Please let us have it in any case. It all takes longer than we'd anticipated. We're getting more and more used to our new life and are always more and more enthusiastic. We have got so far already and if everything goes according to plan we can imagine how the future will be. We are already completely organised with curtains and all the appurtenant bits and pieces. It's quite cosy. I even find time to read the paper and sew. At present I'm making the ornamental cushions for the bedroom. Another sign that we're more settled is that we're having visitors today. We had neighbours in Auckland, he is English, she Canadian, with a 2 month old child, born here. He finished his business now and so they don't have to pay rent in town they're coming to our place and will live in the old house on the property. Funnily enough he was teaching English in Pardubice and only left Czechoslovakia at the end of March. In the meantime he'll try to get a farm labouring job. This occupation is still the best here. We've had the heating on already for the last couple of days. We have an electric heater (2000 volts) that we turn on and in 10 minutes it's warm. There is also a fireplace in the house as you will have seen in films. So as you can see, very pleasant. We're short of nothing. In the meantime we have arranged that our cream is not collected until 10 a.m., so that we can get up later. Today Franz went to the market. Three times a month there are animal sales in the area and Franz always goes to keep up with what's going on. It's like a market except the animals are auctioned. We spent the holidays very pleasantly. Hugs and kisses to everyone. We spent some time with friends of Mr. Brach,

Your Fralís

Fr. Briess, Royal Rd., Massey-Henderson
Cables: Briess Henderson

7/4/1940

My dear family,

We have received your letters of 26th February, 4th March and 6th March, together with enclosures. I've been intending to write you a detailed report for a long time now, but I didn't do it because of pressure of work. However, you didn't go without as my betterhalf writes faithfully to you every week. First I must comment on your letters. As far as your coming here is concerned, it is only really a question of time, because as soon as Marta's Permit is settled, we will immediately apply for yours and hope that it is easier to get. Be assured that we are still behind you. As far as your money in London is concerned, bearing in mind that you may come here, it's better to leave it there in London, than to have it sent to America, as you would lose about £320 on the exchange (about £400 NZ). I don't know anything about the cost of getting here, the greatly increased cost of transport and insurance charges, but I do know they must cost a lot and I don't know if it's worth it (bringing personal chattels to NZ). We got a good deal for £120 - all in and didn't have our luggage sent on. Perhaps it would be best to leave this till you are here, but I don't want to talk you into it. If it went through the Stopford fund, it would be wonderful. If you would lose through the transfer to America then leave the money with Broll (in London). The news about losing your job - economic conditions are not good. I don't want to make your mouths water and give you illusions, but I must say that these things are not problems here, I see so much, it is possible for everyone who wants to work to do so, with reasonable pay, and here on the farm there is temporary work in abundance. At the moment I can't make any definite plans, but I think once you are here we will keep hens as well as our cows and pigs, because they are very profitable, although setting them up costs quite a bit. If you have time, dear Otto, it wouldn't do any harm if you studied poultry farming and if you have the opportunity, learned how to milk. I'm also studying, although I'm putting it all into practice. It's not easy work on the farm, but the peace and freedom and being your own boss and the absence of the continual problems that you have when you run a business, can't be calculated in money terms. It's phenomenal that you could send Fredi the Affidavit, and in such a short time. Unfortunately we can't do anything for him at the moment as he isn't in a neutral country. Hopefully by the time you read this letter, Marta will be a little closer. In the meantime you will have received our telegram about the costs of transferring the money. In any event, today we wrote the enclosed letter to Gretl. We haven't received her telegram yet, but we are hopeful that we won't need it. I will tell you about Sattlers in my next letter, because we didn't have a chance to talk to Porsolts last time we were in Auckland. Haven't you had a letter from Krejzlik for us? As you know it's dear Mama's birthday on 11th May (Adi's) and we wish her all the best. We wish her nothing more and nothing less than health, luck and contentedness at dear Papa's side. Hopefully this will soon come to pass. We can't write ourselves. Broll put your jewellery in the Safe and it's still in London because I didn't want to leave it uninsured in our luggage. We can always get it from there whenever we want it. Robert from Sydney has told us that Hans^{has} an Import and Export business in London and as he is now earning money, you could write to him and ask him to pay the rest of the money he owes, (to you, us?) to Broll, so that he has no chance of getting out of paying it. I'm also writing to the fellow about our money but I don't have much hope because he'll need the money for his business now and because one needs money for speculation which he enjoys in these times.

14/4/1940

My dear family,

Yesterday we got your letter of 14th March. We hope you got all our letters (21st January, 17th January, 29th February, 6th March, 26th March, 7th April). You didn't mention the January letters. We get mail from you regularly now and it makes us very happy to have such continuous contact. We also got a letter from Rosl Friedl on the same day in which Frank's mother-in-law writes a few lines. We answered Rosl's letter by return post. I suppose you're also in contact with her. We hear about the changes, from both sides and are terrified. We have no words to describe our feelings. There can be no such hard punishment anywhere in this world, this injustice must be avenged. And we are sitting here and can do nothing. So many are leaving and there are still so many unlucky ones left behind. Hopefully it'll be better for the parents from now on and they will be left in peace. My blind aunt (Mela) has had to shift house for the third time, isn't that terrible. The beasts make no exception. We hope the revenge isn't too far away. Unfortunately you can't express all you experience in words, but each of us knows best. It is always on our minds how happy we are - that we had the strength and the fortune to leave earlier than we had to. We only write to you because it's not possible to write to the others. Perhaps you could tell Adi and Friedl that we're fine, you know what we're doing from our previous letters, please describe everything fully and in detail and ask them all to excuse our laziness in not writing. We think about Fredi all the time. Frank thinks that perhaps he'll be able to wait it out and have an opportunity later. I never commented on it, perhaps it was a bad thing to have waited so long. I only wish for him that he meets people who help him more than he helped us with the Lift. We could have saved a lot of money through him and could have sold various things here. But now it's past and I'm no longer bothered by it, but I still can't forget. We were surprised that Uncle Dori was at Gretl Honig's, too, because we hear otherwise, that you can only reach my blind aunt's place with great difficulty. What's happening to Herta Grätzer? We were very pleased with the newspaper. Hopefully she'll come soon, also because the Czechs have a good reputation, actually it's the same here, they are all good people and they get ahead. Mrs Stein has a job in a shoe factory and at first he had a hard job, where he had to work at night., then he changed jobs and now he works as an engineer in a factory which he likes. Mr. Aufricht works in a toy factory but is not satisfied. Mr. Porsold works for a builder but is very worried about the situation because there's not much building going on here and so very little need of architectural drawings. He does some private work. She has a student to whom she teaches French, they have 2 rooms where the Aufrichts lived previously and they have furnished and let them and she cooks for the 3 other people. She works hard but she says it's already paying. You know that they've bought a house? Their furniture sank on the "Heidelberg". When I last spoke to her on the phone I invited them to visit us on one of the next few Sundays, otherwise we don't see much of them - they like to mix with high society here but they'll never be able to. People here are very kind, but we new arrivals are not accepted by the upper crust, 10,000 - (Here perhaps only 1,000). She makes a big deal out of it, if she's ever invited by one of them. Generally they haven't been able to adjust and continue their previous way of life. She dresses herself up, with showy jewellery and goes to parties. Most people leave their jewellery at home or in a safe or have already sold it. We don't even wear our wedding rings - in any event, the men don't wear wedding rings here, the women wear them on the left hand. We've got farmer's hands, of course, we don't know any manicurists. We use various creams so that they don't irritate or to avoid getting excema from being in contact with the animals all the time. This week I got excema on my eye. A few weeks ago, a cow hit me across the face with her tail, just caught me on the eye and now the excema developed. It's better already, of course I went to the doctor. This doesn't cost immigrants anything, because there are so many immigrant doctors here, who have very lucrative practices and who treat us without charging. Not the dentist though, despite the fact that we're very friendly with one and he bought a farm for his newpew quite near us, so that we are always together on the weekend.

We were pleased with Otto's letter - it was obvious that he no longer has such a pessimistic view of the future. That's the right way to be. We would be much happier if we didn't have our problems which appear even worse when we feel so free.

Of your plan to give up the insurance business, your brother-in-law reported recently. You can study the theory of poultry farming, we have no fixed place for you, but are of the opinion that it would be best if you established a poultry farm within our farm. One of our neighbours has a farm like that and has almost 4,000 hens, you could learn from him once you are here. He would help you start up. Of course, that's not a fixed plan but we believe at the moment it would be the best thing. I don't know if vegetables would grow well here. The soil is not too good, needs a lot of fertilizer. We have to put manure on to grow grass, never mind vegetables. Potatoes are very expensive here they only grow in the best soil. We know too little about it to be able to comment. At the moment the "boss" fertilizes every day, the tractor does the work, only the seat is very hard and your bottom aches in the evening. We already have real autumn weather, the mornings are particularly cool. I wear 2 jerseys for milking, Franz takes a scarf, a ski jacket and a warm shirt. By the time we finish our work down below it's got so warm that we need summer clothes again. Next month the rain begins, that is, it'll be winter, July, August it rains a lot, in bucketfuls, but there are always sunny days inbetween, so you can hang the washing out to get dry, so I'm told. In the evenings when we come in from milking, we have to have the heater on, we have an electric Sun 2,000 volt and it heats the house up quickly. It's apparently more wet here, than cold. This year the summer was also very wet, it was actually never too hot. We were once!!

Throughout NZ the electric current is 220 volts, I'm putting my iron to good use. The other immigrants all brought radios, frigs, stoves, coffee perculators with them and use them all here. As far as clothes are concerned, the main things are knitted from wool. For the farm, old clothes that can't be worn for good anymore and that are no longer needed for when we go into town. Up to now I haven't worn stockings. For milking I wear high gumboots like Frank. Something for Marietta. Every cow has her name, Rosy, Daisy, Olly, Jenny etc. The dog is called Mac, the cat Minka, here they are all called Pussy.

We're only milking 21 cows, we're letting the others dry out, you have to do that as they have to have a rest form milking before they can calve again. You can count on 3 months. The cows which are drying out are usually milked once a day at first, then every second day, later every third day, until they have absolutely no more milk. I'm sure you'll be interested to hear what sort of meat I buy. I usually buy meat once a week when I go to town. Of course the animals are cut differently here, but by now I know them - gerkhins, salami and other sausages you can't get here - nor frankfurthers.

April/May 1940?

Next Gentleman for a shave!

I'd like to concern myself with your letter of 14th March, for a bit. Most important, I would ask you to date all your letters. Our Piggery is almost ready, the stalls have been ready for a month and we now have 3 breeding sows which should give birth in July, 1 boar, 6 big pigs and 17 smaller pigs which should be ready for sale in about 3 months. I often think of the song about the angry beast, because there's a lot of maintenance involved with keeping pigs. There's a lot of money in those pigs, as the cockies (as the farmers are called here), say. The water pipes are already installed, there will be more put in when we instal the irrigation for the whole farm.

I wouldn't advise you to give up the insurance business, as I'm quite certain in my own mind that we'll get the Permit for you to come, it's only a question of a few months. What my better half wrote about the soil here, vegetables, etc., I must correct as that was a mistake. The soil varies from good to bad in our neighbourhood, for instance we have very very good soil and can cultivate anything in it. Of course you have to fertilize any soil if you want it to yield a good crop, as the old saying goes, "whatever you put into the soil you will get back out of it" Vegetable gardens require a lot of work and also experience, if you want to make reasonable money out of them. The climate, also, plays a part. Vegetables and grain are grown more in the South Island. In my opinion it's more profitable to keep poultry and instal an egg factory. Horticulture and floriculture barely enter into consideration because there are flowers and private gardens everywhere. Perhaps it wouldn't go amiss for you to get some experience or literature relating to cheese production, I would like to try it, because I think you don't have to tie up a lot of money in it. For Marianne it would be quite easy to find satisfactory work. Firstly, in the house, then we intend to plant our own vegetable garden, which as yet we haven't had time to do, and lots of other things. We're not going to put in electric fences because our grass grows too tall (thank God) and it would always shortcircuit. Next month I'll put up ordinary barbed wire, that's where our latest earnings will go. Our March cheque was about £44 but a quarter immediately goes to pay the instalment for fertilizer. Fredi could bring a couple of crates with him, if he comes out and if he has the inclination and opportunity. China and glassware are very expensive here, we only have the most necessary things, quite a cheap make. Other than that he could bring with him all the bits and pieces which one needs in a household. No furniture. My mother-in-law (Marta, Lizzie's mother) can tell him what things. We could pay the rest for him, because he now has an import and export business and is earning. I wrote to him again that Uncle Dori explained that my claim has been completed as Toni advised us. You don't need a fishing licence Otto, you can fish in the sea a few miles away, you can take as many as you like.

Who is the manager at Toni's place, what's happening there? Please write what the official said when he confiscated our things. I'm very curious. The parents should turn to Krejzlik for food. Did Dori go to Hönigs or the other way round? What's happening to Toni now? It would be wonderful if we could celebrate the 3 birthdays together (Lizzie, Otto and Marianne had their birthdays within a few days of each other, Lizzie on 8th July). We wish you all the best, belatedly for your 10th anniversary.

I am enclosing plans of our 2 houses, next time I'll send a plan of the farm. Sattler's address: c/o Inz. Vasicek, Bogota, Columbia, Apartado National 303. I'm also enclosing an application form, in any case, sign it and have your signature witnessed at the British consulate.

Love and kisses,

Written by Frank to Marianne and Otto.

..... imported in times from Denmark, but which don't taste like the ones we are used to. Paprika, caraway seed, cinnamon or other spices are scarce here. Before war broke out, sauerkraut was imported from Canada, that is not available now. Also, there is a different kind of vinegar here, we have already got used to that.

Next year we want to make our own sauerkraut and pickled cucumbers; friends of ours tried it and it was wonderfully successful. Most of all, of course, we miss sausages ((wurst); also, you can't get herrings, like Rollmops, kippers (or bloaters or smoked herrings) - that probably comes from Buckl - also can't be obtained. Gooseflesh is blue here and not nice to eat, chickens are very expensive. So chicken's eggs are very dear too, at the moment they cost up to 3 shillings, but this is the most expensive time. So imagine if you have 200-300 eggs a day from your chickens. They say here that a family can live well on the proceeds of 7-800 chickens. Most poultry farmers have their contracts with city merchants (shopkeepers) the eggs are picked up regularly and there is no great worry about getting rid of them. We are happy with you about the child, she will no doubt know English well already; it is nice if one learns the language so easily. It is also really very nice that the child (Marietta) is getting so used to life over there. So I've told you enough for today, many kisses to all three of you, with love,

Yours

Written by Frank to Otto and Marianne who by 1940 had bought a half share in a chicken farm in Morganville, New Jersey, after about a year in the U.S.A. Marietta was 8.

Undated part of another letter.

Dear Otto,
you don't need a fishing licence, because you can pee as much as you like in the sea which is only a few miles away from us. Who is the manager at Toni's place? What's the trouble there? Please write and tell me what the official said when he came to confiscate our things - I'm very curious to hear. For food, our parents should turn to Krejzlik.
Was Dori at Honigs, or the other way round? What further news of Toni? It would be wonderful if in July we could celebrate the 3 birthdays together (lizzie, Otto and Marianne all in the same week). I wish you a belated happy 10th anniversary. In the enclosures I'm sending a plan of our 2 buildings
Next comes a plan of the farm. Sattlers (friends of the Strattons) address is c/o Inz. Vasicek, Bogota, Columbia, Apartado Nacional 303. Also enclosed is a general application form. Sign it and have it witnessed at the British Consulate.

Greetings and kisses.

Dearest Muls,
So we've got the reply to our efforts to get your Permit, that at present they aren't granting any permits. The answer came in a very kind letter, saying that we should be patient, that one should give careful consideration to the results of not getting the permit. So we will have to wait a bit longer, but we still think as we did before, that we should get it within a fairly short time, but it depends mainly on a quick end to the war. We hope we won't have to wait too long for it. We haven't had a letter from you for a long time - I think you got a bit lazy.

21.4.1940

My dearest,

Today it's Saturday and as we have no visitors I want to gossip a bit with you. Where shall I begin? I hope that you are hearing from us regularly, we write quite often now, once a week on average. I think we are receiving all your letters and we are very pleased with them. Our friends also get letters, so that we always have some news to discuss together. In 2 days it's your birthday. I hope you received the birthday wishes we sent you. Rosl will write to you too. How I wish I were with you. Hopefully next year it will be different. Here, about now, winter is beginning slowly. That means it rains quite a lot, and several times a day. In between it's beautiful Autumn weather. Up to now we haven't felt the heat, this summer was supposed to have been something special. One assumes it must be very good weather for farmers because everyone complains that this year it has rained quite a lot, certainly it is a blessing for the farmer. This year it was a good season for hay. We sold 5 pigs again in the last week, and since then we have 9 altogether. We got a good price, this year livestock is in great demand.

I don't know if I wrote to you that we bought 13 heifers (cows that will calve in July for the first time), that we are already preparing for next season, when we will milk about 40 cows. In 14 days' time we intend to sell several cows which aren't giving enough milk, and so, as you can see, we are becoming farmers. Of course, we didn't do anything at first without asking the advice of various people. Because there is no competition in this occupation, people generally give honest advice. Still, as before, our neighbour is very nice and helps us a terrific lot. In a few days we'll have finished topdressing the whole farm, then we will have our winter activities. At present we are only milking 18 cows, the others are expecting their calves and you leave them for 2-3 months without milking, so that they will recover and give good milk in the season. Our quietest month will be June. We will barely be milking 10 cows. Then I will have my hair permed, we will go to town more often and enjoy ourselves.

This week we went to the pictures for the first time in 8 months! Greta Garbo was playing in "Ninotschka" and we loved it. For Seder we are invited to Oberstens but we won't go as we finish too late in the evening. We'll go into town for the service. I'm very sorry that I don't have the little book which has in it the date of dear Papa's death. I will enquire as to whether it can perhaps be made here. Poor Papa would have been very pleased if he could have seen how wonderful everything is for us here and how happy we are with all that we have.

We consider that we are luckier than before, and everyone must be like that if he has all that he wants and lives accordingly. You don't find many rich people. One thing they don't have here is theatre, but we don't miss it, as they have the best and latest films. On the radio there is always dance music on one station or another and I have it on all day. We are in such good spirits, when our dear Martuska is with us we'll have everything we could wish for, she would be happy with us and enjoy the progress we are making on the farm. This year we still have big expenses but next year it will already be better. In the third year we will add on something extra, and have an ideal farm.

I'm having a peaceful time now. In the afternoon I always sit for a while and sew or go to friends on a farm close by for a chat. Shortly I will join a library so I can read some books. Franz of course, has a lot to do, but is not so busy working as he was at the beginning. Next week he plans to start marking off and dividing the farm properly from our neighbours, so that there will be about 10 fenced off paddocks where the cows can alternate their grazing. At present they go for a walk around the whole farm and we wonder how they always find the place where the freshest grass is. It is altogether so wonderful to observe how the animals have got used to us, how they come when we call, how they let us stroke them and eat from our hands.

There are many different vegetables here that we don't know at all, also fruit. Many apples, so many that we even feed the pigs with them. At present there are a lot of grapes, mostly Muskat, we buy the unscented ones from a Dalmatian nearby. People here are mostly fruit farmers. There are about 3000 Dalmatians, the Chinese mostly sell fruit and vegetables or have laundries. Everything here is in a certain order and looks neat. The roads are phenomenal, mostly asphalt and very wide. The favourite passtime is horse-racing. Everyone is interested in it. I could go on writing for hours but the paper is running out, so.....

Written by Kizzie to her mother Marta

Fr.Briess, Royal Rd. Massey-Henderson R.D.

21st April 1940

Dear Mulls,

Nothing much has happened since our last letter and I will continue with this letter. Today I want to tell you about our finances. We bought the farm for £3,425, of which we paid £1,800 deposit and the rest was left in by way of mortgage by the previous owner, for 10 years. We have to pay £50 per year off the principal and besides this, 4½% interest. The interest is payable quarterly and the £50 principal, paid at the end of each year. You can calculate that each cow will produce £15 per year so that if we milk 40 cows next season, which begins in October, they will produce £600 income, add to that about £150-200 income from pigs we'll have a gross income of about £750-800. Of that, £135 goes in mortgage principal and interest, about £100 for living costs; insurance £60, tax £50 electric power, water, telephone £50, various sundry outgoings £50 so that unless there are unexpected urgent expenses, we should have £300 per year over (Hopefully!) As well as this, we owe at present £105, payable in instalments. The few pounds we have left in the bank will be spent soon when we refence the farm and divide it into paddocks. This is absolutely necessary. In my calculations I forgot the £50 for the fertilizer which we have to buy every year. At the next sale, in about 14 days' time in Kumeu, (6 miles from here), we're going to sell 5 cows which arn't giving much milk. Instead, later on, we're going to buy a bull (breeding steer) and a boar as ours is too old. I'll kill him, or stun and castrate him, then fatten him because if a boar like that isn't castrated it isn't any good for breeding anymore. Then you can only kill and bury him, but if he's castrated you can get about £4 for him. However, the castration is no easy matter because a boar like that is enormously strong and is very dangerous. Either I'll try to give him chloroform or I'll hit him on the head with an iron rod while he's eating, to stun him and then carry out the operation. We've already written to you that our previous neighbours in Auckland lived here because he didn't have a job. They've been here about a month now and tomorrow they're shifting back to Auckland as he found a job. He is a very clumsy chap, actually she is too and we are pleased that they are leaving. The day before yesterday we spent the evening in Auckland, because we finish milking earlier now, as we're only milking 18 cows, the others are having a break before calving. We phoned Porsolts and went to see them, were there till 11 p.m. and had a good time. They send their love. Mrs.Porsolt tells us that she has just written to you. They're coming to visit us next week.

We want to sell the tractor because when I work out what it costs us to run and that sometimes^A needs repairing, then we're better off if the neighbour does the fertilizing for us with his good horses, he only charges 2 shillings per acre for it. So you only find out the pros and cons of something after you've been in it for a while, it's no different, whether it's a business, on the farm or in private life.

I can't enclose the plan of the farm today which I promised you because it's rather complicated to do and I was busy all week, mainly fertilizing. But I'll send it soon. Do you know what has happened to Hans Hauser? in particular where he is now? We left him a suitcase in London and didn't know what to do with it. Maybe you could ask after him. Prof.Starkenstein's daughter is apparently on her way here (from Holland), perhaps that will interest Prof. Langschus. That's all for today, we hug and kiss you and all our dear ones,

From your

Hans Hauser was a cousin of Frank's who after the war settled in Göteborg in Sweden and was involved in the silk trade. He had a daughter and 2 grand children.

27/4/1940

My very dear family,

This is the third month that there has been no mail from you. Of course we are sure it's our fault, as you were writing regularly. None of our friends here had any mail, although recently Porsolts got a registered letter from Bogota and Hilde Altmann, our Viennese friend has received every letter sent from New York, perhaps because they were written IN English. We are asking you to write to us on an open postcard in English because we're burning to know how you and the rest of the family are getting on. Even though we're not so worried we'd still like to know how everyone is., especially when we read letters like the ones Porsolts get which contain nothing encouraging, saying "help us before it's too late" It's even more pathetic that you have to admit that you can't do a thing. Steins also got a letter recently, which on the other hand sounded quite encouraging. It's lucky that time goes so quickly. No news from Marta since November.

Nothing much has happened here, it's Autumn now, though we've just had a couple of days of lovely weather. We're milking once a day and only 13 cows. Franz works hard, the farm is a model, unrecognisable. We're cleaning up and burning any rubbish.

This year, as last year, we go to town in the evenings and visit friends. Recently we got friendly with a dentist from Berlin and he and his wife came to stay for 3 days over Easter. Steins have just left, they stayed with us for 3 days too, as it was a long weekend. We've had enough of visitors and company.

The latest news is that Gerty Porsolt is expecting, she's 3 months. In the meantime, her parents know nothing about it. Immi and Jonny (his brother) are delighted. The latter has bought a car and brought the Steins to our place. The car is small and very old and when you look at it you're amazed that it goes at all. Jonny is happy with it and very proud, though he knows what sort of a beauty he's got. At present he's working as a butcher, and is quite content with his new vocation. He's not married so it's boring for him to stay on the farm for so long, so he went back to town. Besides, he was expecting a friend from England for whom he got the Permit to come here, though he hadn't sent it off when he met his Louise. He wants to marry this friend who is from the same town as he is. He's very keen to get married and I can well understand it.

Our main source of income at the moment is the hens. They're laying wonderfully right now. We've got 50 laying hens and approximately 20 that will start laying in the next few weeks. Next week we want to buy another 20. We like poultry farming very much, we're always excited when we go to collect the eggs. It's interesting to see which hens are getting used to us. We always try to stroke them when they're little and now, as soon as we come to the shed, they run to meet us and bend down to show us they want to be stroked. They're very tame, let us take the eggs quietly out of the nests even if they're sitting on them when we come. Of course, they're a lot of work, but the result makes it worthwhile. Eggs are very expensive here at present, they cost about 3 times as much as they did at home and the feed is terribly expensive as well.

We made some changes in the house too. At the moment I'm repainting the bathroom, which was painted a blue/green colour, in beige (they don't use white here). I repainted the toilet as well, but it smudged as Frank and I both got stuck to it when we couldn't wait for it to dry. Franz had put putty on the windows to reseal them and made other small repairs. As you can see we're still not having our period of hibernation and we'll be lucky to get it this year.

We're still in love with our farm and love it more and more every day, although lots of things have changed. I hope I've told you enough now and hand over. Heartfelt kisses to all of you.

Written by Lizzie to Marianne and Otto

April 1940

Up to there, is a beautiful stack of cow shit, we take it to the farm and use it as manure. This time we don't only have good news. The last 10 days we had no luck. Despite everything we lost 6 piglets, who died and we don't know why. Because of this we asked an expert from the Department of Agriculture to come and check where the trouble lies. Now we are waiting for him daily. We are also worried about losing more pigs and we sold 5 and got a lousy price because it's not the right time to sell such small pigs. We sold 14 days ago, some big pigs (Baconers) and got £16 for them, a very good price. Our current situation with pigs is as follows: 3 sows, 1 boar, 6 piglets and a baconer which we'll sell in 14 days. We don't know yet whether to buy more pigs. Anyway we want to wait a month. We have of course, disinfected everything thoroughly, so that it will be O.K. now. A second unpleasant thing is our tractor. Unfortunately it didn't work as it should have and we want to sell it. We accept that we won't get back the money we've invested. We bought it on the advice of our friend, Dr. Tichauer, whose brother-in-law has a tractor, but it wasn't suitable for our farm. Besides that it used a lot of petrol. We made another mistake in that we bought the farm, but before we moved in we bought a topdresser. We hurried up the purchase because they told us that they would increase in price and we would definitely need it. They are now £6 dearer, but in our district it's the custom for our neighbour to do the topdressing for the others, and the owners only assist. He has the machine, supplies the horses and whatever else is necessary. So we didn't need to buy the topdresser and have already sold our almost new one at a loss. We only had a small piece of land to use it for anyway. As well as everything else, we wanted to let our neighbour earn some money as he helped us so much for nothing. This last week Franz began to help the neighbours make a fence. We gave up the idea of an electric fence as on our property there is only tall grass. If the grass touches the live electric wire, it will short circuit. The fence will take a month, of course, it depends on the weather. Here, at present it is beautiful Autumn weather but we are already expecting that the rain will begin this month. It rains a lot till the beginning of August. Some nights are already quite cool. We are already using the heater in the evenings. In the day time I wear warm singlets. Yesterday we went to town I went to the hairdresser and had a perm. In the evenings we are now finished in half an hour and want to start a social life. We've also been to the pictures, and saw "Ninotschka" with Garbo. I enjoyed it very much. We got another new kitten from a neighbour. It is called Tommy and is very clever, runs after us like a little dog. We would very much like to have the address of Otto Loeffler in Bolivia - can you get it for us? We enjoyed Krejzlik's letter very much. He is a faithful soul. Franz was quite touched. We have a few photos, we'll send them next time as they are not developed yet. I don't know if my better half will find time to add a few lines - I'll end now in any case for today with heartfelt greetings and kisses to you all,

Yours sincere,

Written by Lizzie. Otto Loeffler was her first cousin and had left Czechoslovakia for S. America. Their mothers were sisters and were living together in Czechoslovakia when they were deported by the Germans. Otto's mother was Adele Loeffler nee Berger. Lizzie's mother was Marta Löwy nee Berger.

My dearest family,

I want to report what's going on in my head.

When Broll wrote that your money has been transferred, I went to the Bank immediatly to find out whether it is possible to send you the money from here, but I am sorry to say the Manager advised that it is absolutely impossible to get Reserve Bank permission for it and therefore we advised that as soon as your money arrives we shall ask for a permit to send your money £10 monthly as support as it is easier to get a permit for this purpose. According to one of your last letters I racked my brains as to how I could best invest the balance of the money and I discussed the matter with other people also. Several days later I received advice from the Bank that the money had arrived. Two or three days after that there was a clearing sale on a big farm in our district and after careful consideration about how to invest your money we came to the conclusion that instead of milking 32 cows as we have till now, we should milk some 50 cows next season and acquire 500 fowls and therefore we bought some cows at this clearing sale there and then. I also bought all sorts of building materials for 2 big fowl houses and ordered some other materials which should have been delivered some time later.

Then we received your cable and as a result of that we cancelled all the materials ordered, of course, but we ^{had} already purchased the other materials and the cows which are now in our possession. Immediatley I went to the Bank and asked for a permit and was told by the Manager that it should be much easier to get the money to Palestine. I have applied for a permit to remit the money to the Barclays Bank in Tel Aviv. As soon as permission is granted I shall give instructions for remittance. But before arranging remittance I shall check with you again as to whether to remit the money, on account of the changing situation. For the above purchases I have spent about £130. We ourselves have at present very little incoming money as we are having our dead season at present, but I think I will be able to pay £30 out of our own money so that there will be only a balance of about £100 here which, however, should bring you good interest. We received £385.15.2 in New Zealand currency, from Broll. If we would have had 50 cows and 500 fowls it would have been necessary to employ a helper as it would have been impossible to manage everything on our own. In any case, I shall do my very best to get the permit for transferring the money to enable you to receive it as soon as possible.

That's the business section over.

Lizzie already reported about my work on the farm. For a long time now a problem has been on my mind and that is, how to get the hens their feed at the right time in the afternoon, if, now that we're only milking once a day, we go into town and aren't there in the evening. Finally today, with Mr. Stein's help, I made a model and eventually hope to build a self-feeder that I hope will be cheap, as it's only made out of a rat trap, an alarm clock and a box covered with some thick chicken wire. I'm very proud of my invention and if I find that no such thing exists here I shall take out a patent on it.

For today, 1,000 hugs and kisses.

Yours Franzl

2.5.1940

My very dearest family,
We received your letter which came on the Monterey from Australia, punctually on the 30th. We can't describe the feeling of happiness that we are now getting mail from you regularly. Thank God your latest letter mentioned no unusual troubles and we hope it will stay that way. We now only write about ordinary things as we have been told that even if we write airmail the mail would barely arrive 2 days earlier. I think that the improved timing is unimportant and you don't save much. We have been writing really dilligently for the last month and post the letters straightaway, maybe some go via Europe and reach you even earlier. We will find that out soon. I have often thought what a pity it is that you don't have a typewriter, and you can't organise the replies as well as we can. When you write that you received the letter of such and such a date, I go to my file of letters, get out the appropriate letter and refer to it as I read your reply. That way we are in close contact and it seems as if you are really here. It frustrates me that we always read in Isi's letters that they have no news from us, although that has been remedied already and they can see the photos of us. We can imagine the joy as our pictures do the rounds and each person will have comments to make.
As we wrote in our last letter, we wrote to Gretl and were naturally very pleased to get news from there, because we could move quite differently. We have put Marta's affairs in the best hands and this is the last attempt - if it doesn't work out this time, we can't do anything more than wait until the situation improves. You can imagine how I feel about it. It's so silly how drawn out it all is, but good things take time. We would so much like you to be with us already. It's time you settled down. But don't worry. We will prepare everything for you and once you are with us you will feel as well as we do. If you would get the money from the Stopford fund it would be great., but don't worry, there's no point and you wear yourself out worrying over these things. What you have to say about various friends interests us a lot, please continue. Also thanks for your news from Adi. Mrs. Aufricht got a card from Margerota Banbara a few days ago. She told me yesterday when I met her in Auckland. He is still working in the sportswear factory, earns £4-15 clear per week. They intend to buy a chicken farm close to Auckland, he'll keep up his job and work on the farm on weekends. At the moment she is a waitress at lunchtimes in a big warehouse, but she's giving it up. We invited them to our place on 12th May to discuss it all and advise them. This Saturday Porsolds are coming to our place. We speak with them often now and intend to visit them a lot in winter. I don't know if I already wrote and told you that Gerti has 3 pensioners living and eating at her place. She is quite busy. So everyone finds something in his own way. Here everyone works, especially the immigrants for whom it's so necessary - that's what we live for. We are glad that Marietta settled in so well and there are no after effects from the scarlett fever.
Now I'll tell you the news about the farm. First I want to answer you, dear Otto, when a cow like that does a weewee, just when you put the "milking cups" on. You are so used to the cows and like them so much, that you don't say anything at all. These things don't happen so often. The cow is at the most in the bail for 10 minutes. They may lift their tail, that's the sign that something is about to happen, then you leap up, grab the shovel which is nearby and if it's a hard job, you can catch it quickly with the shovel, then you throw it in a particular place in the yard.

Written by Franz to Otto.

4/5/1940

My dear family,

There is no ship going in the next few days which could take this letter, so I'm keeping this letter here so I can add to it. Firstly to you letter of 2nd April. We note your advice regarding the possibility of transferring the money and if we need it, will send direct to Gretl for it. It doesn't surprise me that Eric quarrels with his family, because he did nothing but quarrel all his life and personally, I can only say that's what he always does. Do Hugo and Fränzi want to stay in Holland? Do you know anyone in London who has connections with the Stopford fund? If not, let me know with the exact description of the situation, and I will write about it to a friend in London who will certainly be able to hurry the matter up. You write about Hans's partner, but I don't know who he is. You don't mention his name. Is it Rubenstein? I really don't play tennis anymore, I play with hay and a pitchfork, axe and spade while I have put the tennis racket away for Marietta, till she plays at school, which is the custom here.

As far as our income is concerned, it will definitely decrease in the coming months, although it will still be more than enough to maintain our standard of living. It's great that everyone in Olmütz has news of Fralis (us) because the only way they can possibly get news is through you. They should pass the news on right away to Tivoli (Where Marta's, Lizzie's mother was living)! Any travel on my part, in this occupation, is out of the question, you can tell Friedl (Dad) that.

Now the "F" in Lizzie's letter. We reported in a previous letter 1 pig died. Altogether 6 have died, we can't do anything about it, it's like being in business, mostly you win but sometimes you lose. In the meantime the pig inspector has already been here twice and in the next few days I will build the pipeline which will take the skim milk to the pigs, that is, I will lay half inch wide pipe. Up to now we had quarter inch pipe, but there wasn't enough pressure, so that the milk stagnated in the pipe and after a couple of days became contaminated and produced large quantities of bacteria which was the cause of the sickness in the pigs. The pipe I've used till now, I'll sell and put the money towards the work of taking out the old pipe and laying and digging in the new pipe so it will cost nothing.

Now to the "O" in the enclosed last letter. Lizzie forgot the most important thing. When we milk, the cat comes and sucks milk directly from the cows' nipples, that's how she likes to eat best of all. This afternoon Porsolts were here, they like it. Mr. Broll wrote about your £320, that he needs a declaration from us, saying that the money which we entrusted to him actually was the money from your account with Singer and Friedlander. We sent him this declaration yesterday by airmail. He writes that the transport of the money should go smoothly now. Just write to him if you want anything in this connection.

Fishing is a very popular sport here. One of our neighbours, a carrier, for example, went fishing last Sunday and caught 13 beautiful snapper and 3 lobsters. You don't need a licence. And now Otto, something about your previous profession. As far as I can find out, there is no insurance at all here for animals, against different accidents, as for example, during calving, if an animal is run over on the road, or on the farm. Perhaps in the U.S. there is something like that, I imagine that something like that here would pay quite well. Find out about it please and let me know in detail.

What more have you heard from Fredy and about his plans? You, dear Otto, should try to write to Fischl from Klicany to tell him to send us direct evidence of your agricultural experience on his farm in CSR, as we might be asked for it and I wouldn't like the application to be refused for not having it.

On Monday we'll sell 5 cows and should get a good price for them. I was absolutely delighted with Krezlik's letter and I'll write soon to answer him. 1000 hugs and kisses,

YOur

Written by Frank to Otto and Marianne.

6/5/1940

We will have about 2 years of hard work, then we hope, God willing, to be able to lead a lovely comfortable life. What's Marietta doing? I had lots of questions to ask her, but Mama Adi has already asked them all. I have already thought of a number of things to discuss with her, as soon as you arrive. Up till now we haven't seen much of the beauty of this country or rather, we haven't seen anything because we haven't been to the pictures even once, nor any entertainment. On weekends we have now as before, friends who visit from Auckland, they bring all their food with them, do the washing up and tidy up after themselves so that there is no work involved for my housewife. We hope that soon you can do all these things with us, hopefully in the meantime another nought will have grown on your Bank balance, so you won't have any problems.

Aufrichts aren't living with Porsolts any more, we don't know why, we'll never learn the true reason. In the meantime, hopefully, the Bambaras have the hotel in Full operation as now is the most beautiful time in Taormina, with luck, full of pound and dollar-paying guests.

Your questions on the well-being of our herd of cattle I can touch wood, answer favourably. In the meantime we were given 2 budgies to add to the menagerie. The few lines addressed to Porsolts you referred to in your letter were not enclosed. You mustn't be surprised that I'm so tired from the physical work, but imagine that we had had only 12 days experience before, on a farm and suddenly landed in the middle of the whole farming operation. 50,000 quadrameters of grass to cut, turn over several times, make into heaps, collect the heaps together and build 3 huge haystacks, sew the covers out of sacks, to enclose the haystacks and all as quickly as possible so that it wouldn't get wet, that's a lot of work. As well as this, to milk the cows twice a day when we hadn't yet learnt to do it well, to feed the pigs and do all the various daily chores when we were not used to hard physical work. We are now the same weight as we were when we got married and feel very good for it as we have now got used to the work, and the hardest work is done now. Our neighbour, as before, is extraordinarily kind and helpful.

What's happening with the business (in Czechoslovakia) now? Mama writes that the old employees are no longer there. Toni should go and learn the baker's trade from Krejzlik as this trade is greatly sought after, has favourable work conditions and is well paid. He should let us know what he is planning. His ticket could be paid for out of his money in London, which, Mr. Broll is looking after. I can imagine that you dear Otto, because of the Affidavits, are neglecting your duty, but unfortunately nothing can be done about it - it is the same for us as for all the other lucky ones who are out of it, no different. We lose a whole day, in that we have to go to Auckland to settle these matters, even though it's only 15-16 miles away. But I am now, as before, determined to keep my work and to do it all for you. Now, I've told you everything higgledy-piggledy and I'll write again as soon as possible and eventually send an illustrated newspaper. In the meantime we send our regards and kisses, give our regards to all the others, Friedl, Dori, Mintscha, the Bäckers and Kohlen aunts, Fanni etc,

Your Lizzie and Franzl

Friedl and Adi were Frank's parents

Dori was Hans Briess's father i.e. Frank's uncle

Bambaras were Otto's relations (his sister married a Bambara). They lived in Taormina, in Sicily and owned a hotel.

Written by Frank.

11/5/1940

My dearest family,

How wonderful it is to get mail on the ship when it arrives and I can never tell you enough how happy we are to get your news, even though we've often heard some of it before, like the Norwegian business. Time goes on and the situation doesn't look very encouraging. We've lost hope of progressing any further with Marta's immigration for the time being because we feel it would be too dangerous. We'll wait about another 14 days and if we haven't heard anything by then we'll stop her application and put yours in process. Shouldn't be any problems regarding residence, so hopefully it will be settled quicker. I'm so sad about Marta's application, I can't talk myself out of it. I have a heavy heart. We don't even know what the next hours will bring. In the meantime you will have received our letters of 26th March, 7th April 14th April and you should've been satisfied with the length of the letters. We're writing really detailed letters now and you must be completely in the picture. A letter from Adi and Rosl and Emmy Ziffer, Englova 6, arrived with yours. We'll report the latter through Mull. She is really a faithful soul and writes many interesting things though very sad news (Musil and Dr. Lampl are permanently in prison, Ziffer almost 8 days).

And now to your latest letter of 18th April. With the same mail as this letter, we're writing to Broll about your money and jewellery. If he can't remit it to you in America right away without loss, then he should send it directly here, at least the jewellery. Then we'll open an account here for you with the Bank of N.S.W. We're also writing straightaway to Dir. Federer, by registered letter. It is very reassuring for us to hear that our dear parents have adjusted to the changed conditions so well, for Papa it must be terrible not to be able to go out on the street, although perhaps it's best in these times. If he has his card games 3 times a week he has a good distraction. Fredy and Irene's situation isn't quite clear to me. I assume that it was better for the general state of affairs for them to separate. Don't you know when and if they can come to you? The poor soul must be very sorry now (that he married her). Things like these leave their mark on people. Marianne, you ask what radio stations we listen to. We barely get N.Z and Australia, England, Berlin (wonderful, but we can't bear to listen to such a bunch of lies), Russia. Shortwave, of course, only at night mostly. However, we do have a time difference of 10½ hours from England. We have an American radio.

We're glad to hear business has picked up a bit again for Otto, it should stay that way, he is certainly very capable to be able to succeed in a foreign country in such a short time, to even have some savings already. Our cheques are getting smaller and smaller because we're milking fewer cows, only 13. The April cheque will be only about £25. Last week we sold 5 cows and barely got £25 for them. So we muck around all the time, we buy and sell. Unfortunately the cheques won't improve until August. In the meantime our pigs are all right now. We only have 11 now. Tomorrow our boar will be castrated, if all goes well, we might get up to £4 for him. The weather is always rainy and damp and cold at night, then we get a beautiful Autumn day like today that completely makes up for the previous 14 days bad weather. People say it's like that here in "winter" too. So the climate is really wonderful. Last week Porsolds were here and today Aufrichts with another 2 English people who we met before, through Aufrichts. We're buying our frig and radio from these people. It was very pleasant. The Aufrichts can't decide what to do. They told me they should have decided before now. There was a poultry farm for sale quite near us, but before they could make up their minds, the farm was sold. Thursday evening we're going to Auckland to Porsold's, so you can see we've quite social life, we're booked up for days ahead. Tomorrow the people who first showed us how to farm are coming to see us. Mr. Perl is coming next week. Also we have a telephone now. Our signal is long, short, long. We're sharing the line with 9 other people - it's so much cheaper.

It's really great that Marietta got such a good report, she is really a good girl and gives you much pleasure. We would like to have such a daughter too. Now I'll let František take over. He is very decent too and writes very often. Many kisses, sincerely, from your,

Next please! There's not much left for me to say. I'm busy the whole time now, putting in the new fence and we're making good progress with it, we've just been held up for a few days because of the rain. Yesterday we bought a few winter coats for the cows (cow covers). Today we put one of them on a cow which had just calved. She ran around, quite crazy, all the other cows ran after her and sniffed around being nosy, like all women when they see another wearing something new. Papa would say, "a farce". Before a cow shits she does a long contented Pffffff (we'd say a fart) and away she goes. It's no laughing matter and is part of farm science how these and other farm animals like cows, pigs, dogs, cats, ducks and other poultry do it, how it should look, and how it shouldn't look. One pig for instance, couldn't fart and his stools were too hard, so I gave him warm cows' milk and castor oil (rizinus). And now he can fart again, quite content. We're going to buy still more pigs, not because the earnings are greater, but because if you have to buy in food for the winter (£10 for 6 pigs profit) but mainly to produce as much as possible to increase exports to England, to support the war effort to defeat the bloodhound who brought so much misfortune to the human race. The promised photos are not ready yet, but I will send them. Next time I'll also send a couple of illustrated newspapers, I must just find out how to go about sending them. I've already finished about 400m of fencing. Also, I've almost got the new pipes ready to take the skimmilk to the pigs, meanwhile the old pipes are outside again and will be sold next week. I told you about it all in the last letter. And now it's bedtime, Hugs and kisses,

First part written by Lizzie, this page by Frank, to Otto and Marianne.

18/5/1940

My dearest

For the last few days I've been preparing a letter for you in my thoughts. I always speak to myself in my mind. When I read your letter and see that you still have no news from me, I'm very sad/ I can imagine how discouraged you must be. You will have received my last letter, that's the only consolation, in fact you'll have quite recent photos of me and as I know they'll give you a lot of pleasure I had some more done. When I write to you like this I could compose a love letter. I feel so strongly as if I'm speaking to you when I'm writing that it couldn't be any different if you were sitting in the room with me. In any event, I received a letter from Ernst, in which he also sends me news of his aunt. I think this news is now out of date. His parents already have somewhere to live and he wants to go to America. These days we think of him often and of Rosl Fried and are very upset as we imagined her fate very differently. Hopefully her future will turn out more favourable. We hope so, from the bottom of our hearts.

And now, something more about us. It's late Autumn here, that is, it rains quite a lot and mornings and evenings are quite cool. I usually wear my blue jacket and green pullover for milking. I bequeathed my other jacket to Frank. He wears a woollen singlet, longsleeved shirt and his jacket over that. Besides, this we wear trousers and rubber boots as you can see from the pictures. Continuous heating is not known here - they put the electric oven on when they need it, then within 10 minutes the room is warm. Only in one room is it possible to heat with coal, but till now we have never used it.

I don't know if I described for you before the way our home is arranged. The place in which I spend most time is the kitchen. Everything is built in, the whole sideboard. Above I have the dishes - 12 big flat ones, 12 small plates, 12 glass plates, 6 coffee cups, 6 soup plates, a meat dish, a potato dish. Besides this I have a mokka set (small coffee cups) and a coffee and tea set of American glass, a cake plate, a crystal plate (never put with crystal). I have 2 big casserole dishes, otherwise the 2 small ones which I brought with me. Here I bought 4 in various sizes (they are very expensive) and a big pot. I put these things on the shelf in the bottom of the sideboard, on the other shelves I have the washing up things. Attached to the sideboard is a kind of counter, like a salesman has in a shop for his dealings. In the middle is the place for washing up and underneath is a place for big sacks of flour. On the farm we always have lots of supplies - especially me because every 5-6 days I bake a big loaf of bread. Then in the cupboard where the hot water boiler (electric) is, there is a place where I keep brooms and things like that. Also, I have the coal and electric cooking stove, a small table and 2 chairs and the frig. The kitchen is very roomy. It's painted olive green and beige. I cook daily, meat, fruit or vegetables, potatoes and dessert. Sometimes I bake a cake, which lasts for 2 days, omlettes, kaiserschmarren, pancakes, apple dumplings etc. Besides I can make a wonderful butter pastry similar to Frau Fischkus recipe, but with water and vinegar because Rum is too dear. Although I won't be as good a cook as you for a long time, I surprise myself sometimes at how well I get on and how good the results are. The guests always say so and I have a good reputation here as a cook. Two girls recently said to me "you know, Mrs Briess, we like to come here because you have such nice meats" That was some acknowledgement, wasn't it? But I like the cooking too. I seldom make soups, only when we have beef. In the living room we have a separate part for seating, as we had previously, in our livingroom (in Czechoslovakia), then a buffet, where I keep the cutlery in the drawers and the table linen in the other compartments. Also a trolley (which is very important here as I have no servants) I put everything in the kitchen on the trolley and wheel it in. Then we have quite a large radio with which we can listen to the rest of the world. This radio is a big box about 1½ m. high and ¾ m wide and it stands directly on the floor. It is a really beautiful piece of furniture. On the buffet I have the candlesticks and the cups which you gave me for my birthday present and Otto's wedding present. In the bedroom with the wide bed I have a built in linen-cupboard as I had at home and a vanity where I can do my hair and put on makeup. I have 2 big cupboards in another room that I haven't done anything

P.S. Have you any pictures of our parents? When we were in London we asked for them so often and we would be very happy to have some. Franz has no picture of his mother Rosa and would like very much to have one. I would love to have a photo of my father, that would be more difficult, but please try.

Written by Lizzie, to Otto and Marianne.

24/5/1940

Henderson

My dearest family,

Even if I wrote every day, there would always be something interesting to write about. On Wednesday we received for the third time the reply to our application which was refused. From our last letters you will realise that we had no great hopes for a favourable reply to Marta's application. We want to postpone the matter until finally Mr. Horowitz gets a knock on his head. Also it's not a good time to apply for your Permit either, as we hear, generally. We want to wait till we hear that the outlook is favourable, that there's something to be done for your cause, then we will do everything we have to. It's awful, what is happening in the world. So we must all have patience. Today our family increased - a male calf was born. When we went to see our "dry stock" (cows which are waiting to calve, calves and heifers) this morning we found the little calf already running around happily near the others. It's the first cow - up to now we've always had heifers. We're going to sell one of the 3 heifers.

Once we'll have installed the pipes which will take the skimmilk to the pigs there should be peace and they should thrive magnificently. Toi, toi! (fingers crossed). We've reduced the number of cows we're milking - barely 9 in the evenings and with today's new arrival, 10 cows. We're only milking by hand for so few it's hardly worth getting the machine dirty. For a week now, we've had a new dog. His name is "Joc". He brings in the cows and saves us lots of time. From next week on we'll be feeding with hay, now that they say winter is really in full swing.

At the moment I'm sitting by the open window in wonderful sunshine, it is 4 in the afternoon. But yesterday it rained furiously and was damp and cold. Franz even put on his coat which Papa would have called a flea coat. It's very wet on the farm and you can only get around in high gumboots, which we usually wear for milking. In the meantime we got rid of 3 of our 4 cats and the dog, Mac, disappeared too.

We go to town really often now, are invited out a lot. Yesterday we went with Porzolt and Aufrichts to visit some New Zealanders. Great news! Porzolt bought a car. Second hand of course, but still a nice little car. She pestered Immi the whole time. Their luggage went down in the Heidelberg, so they don't need the money to pay for the Lift, so they bought the car. It's about as big as a Hadimrška. Immi and Gerti are busy learning to drive. Meanwhile, Hans (called Jonny here) is the chauffeur. By the way he has a motorbike. Aufrichts bought a small house, so they can live cheaper, as rents here are very high. They're keeping 4 rooms and kitchen for themselves and letting the 5th room and kitchen. They will do quite nicely out of it. They've changed their minds completely about buying a farm, apparently he wasn't keen on farming. It isn't everyone's cup of tea. Porzolt is coming to our place again next Sunday, this time they'll have the car already. As you can see, we're seeing them quite often. We also visited them this week. They entertain a lot and go out everywhere. We'd like to start inviting people too now that we're organised and it's a good diversion for us, if we can go to town and then on Saturday or Sunday people can come out to us. We're very content in every respect, we only wish that the world would be at peace again soon. We hear a lot of news several times a day in different languages. London broadcasts in German and Sydney too. (We haven't heard from Robert for a long time). We haven't yet received the newspapers you promised, perhaps because they're in a foreign language? On Tuesday we hope to have news from you because a ship is due to arrive again. Hopefully things are going well for you and you are as satisfied as we are. What are you doing Marietta? We talk about you a lot, and I always take your picture out of my pocket and show it around. Mrs. Porzold recently also showed some photos of you around and everyone is curious to meet you in the flesh. Hopefully it'll be soon. How's your English? I'm sure you already speak it well, like a native American, do you correct your Mum and Dad? When you get here, you'll be able to correct me too. You had an excellent report, congratulations. You don't have to be a painter - there are other careers. So, dear children, hugs and kisses for today to all 3 of you, hold your heads high, we'll succeed yet in getting together. Good things take time

Yours sincerely,

with yet.

We are barely milking 13 cows at present, next week it'll be even fewer, of course we have less cream and earn less. In the last few days we got 2 cats from some neighbours and a dog, as ours won't work with the cows. The new dog should be better.

As yet we don't know, we're just letting him run round till he gets used to the place. We now have 4 cats, 2 dogs, and 2 budgies. Last week I bought some chives and planted them, they are a rarity here. Also we bought some sauerkraut imported from Palestine.....

Written by Lizzie to her mother in Czechoslovakia

Henderson 2 June 1940

My dear family,

This time I'm very disappointed. The latest ship from Australia, the Monterey brought no mail. We assume that we'll hear from you on the 7th June when the Mariposa arrives. It is Sunday and I have to start reporting backwards because that's how I think it out in my head.

The Porsolds were to have come with their brother today. They were due at 2p.m. but phoned to say that they couldn't come, the battery in the car was flat and they couldn't start it. Yesterday other friends missed the bus and couldn't come. As well as them, another family, a dentist, Dr. Wagner, was to have come but cancelled too. So we're on our own. Franz is already snoring and I turned the radio on, am listening to jazz music and am writing to you. This coming Tuesday some friends invited us to go to Hamilton to a dairy show. And our neighbour, when we told him, offered to milk our 7 cows in the evening, so we wouldn't have to hurry back. It's already dark now at 5 o'clock so the cows have to be in the yard by then otherwise they can't find us. Isn't that decent of our neighbour.

Yesterday was a momentous day for us, we got a collie who is like our Barry, so that's what we called him. He is 5 months old and grown already, he's a pedigree. A farmer advertised him in the paper and I replied and yesterday we went to choose him from a litter of 5. Don't say that we have no worries but why not take the opportunity of having some joy in our lives. And so Barry is lying next to me and is snoring like his master.

Another development is that in September we're going to plant an acre of passionfruit on trial. Passionfruit is a tart fruit, very popular here, you can make jam with it or even use it in savoury dishes. I'd never heard of it before - have you? There is a jam factory here which guarantees to buy the passionfruit for 5 years and also guarantees the price. We should make £100 a year out of it. The first year you cover costs and the second year you start to make money. An expert from the Agriculture Dept comes and advises. The plants, as such, don't require any looking after, you only have to weed. It is a climbing plant. A few weeks ago, we bought a horse and a sow. We're feeding a little with hay though we still have enough grass. The sow isn't pregnant yet, she's still too young. Next month she'll be ready. Did we tell you that the boar has already been castrated? We're fattening him up now and we'll sell him in 2 months. Last week we sold another pig and got a good price. Next season we want to have as many pigs as possible, not only for the good profit, but also because meat and produce from the land is just as important as weapons, for the war effort. At the moment we're looking around for a young boar that we want to keep for future use, we also want to buy a bull. Our fence is making progress although the weather is like our April weather. Last week another cow calved, but I think I already wrote that. Next week another is due, so there are always changes, we only wish you were here already so that you could experience it all with us. This week we wrote to our solicitor and asked what he advises us to do, but we think we'll have to wait until a more favourable time. Hopefully not too far away. I send you best wishes for your birthdays. Hopefully we'll really celebrate the next ones together and in greater peace. Stay well and in good spirits, things will get better for all of us. Write often and in the smallest detail about the family, that's all for today, with hugs and kisses to you and Marietta,

Yours sincerely,

It's quarter to 6 and we've just come in from milking, now it's my turn. First as usual I want to comment on the contents of the previous page, there are a few items which with a better explanation will be clearer. Hamilton is a town with a population of about 30,000 is in the heart of the Waikato area, the richest area of New Zealand named after the Waikato river which runs through it and irrigates it. Every year there is a winter show there, known throughout New Zealand, of everything relating to farming. Passionfruit is a vine that grows like wild grapes and grows up the sides of houses, looks like a pigeon or hen's egg and is mainly used in the making of aerated water. To start off

with I'll plant 1 acre, fertilize and harrow, enclose the whole area and put up thick wire netting on which the plants can climb. In September which is planting time, we'll put in 1 year old plants, which we'll buy from a nursery. You can calculate about 600 plants to the acre and each will bear about 20lbs of fruit. The guaranteed price is at least 2d a pound, so that the profit per acre is about £100 annually. One of our neighbours who has grown passionfruit before, had almost double that yield but when you work it out, it's better to work on the pessimistic side and be pleased when it turns out better. The fruit is packed in sacks and collected from the farm.

Horse: We bought a big strong beautiful quiet horse, about 10 years old, to use for all the heavy work. At first I only used him to give out the hay, though we still have plenty of grass, we began to use hay a few days ago to make the grass last a little longer because in the middle of winter (July, August) the grass doesn't grow. At first I fed hay every second day. I get the horse, which I have to catch in the paddock first, and hitch it to a sledge which is the main vehicle on the farm, go to the haybarn, then I get up the ladder and with a swordlike instrument, cut big pieces of hay off the stacks, which I then load on the sledge and take to the paddock where the cows are. They're already waiting for me at the gate and then I distribute the hay randomly over the whole paddock. The sow is a Canadian Berkshire, a much sought after breed here and we got her cheap. I have a lot of fun with the pigs altogether and each feeding time they provide us with some new entertainment. When the pigs are hungry they start to knock, that is they lift up their trough and let it fall on the wooden floor of the sty. If I come to feed them at the usual time, they kick up a fearful racket, and if I give them the skimmilk which is at present mixed with molasses, bran and meatmeal because there's not enough milk, and pour it into the spout of the trough, the pigs get up and let the food run into their mouths and fight each other, so that they're a delight to watch. Before we would have used the toast "with that our children should get fat tummies?" Now we must say "And that's how our piglets will get big tummies". When they're full, you don't know if they are rounder than they are long or vice versa. With our 4 breeding sows, Piggie, Percy, Poggie and the latest addition, Greedy (because she eats so enthusiastically) the situation looks good. The first 3 have already got beautiful tummies and hopefully will have big litters in July.

By the way we were not without visitors today. As I was in the middle of a wonderful sleep, Dr. Tichauer came with other friends for a short visit and we talked about farming. In the garden we have many beautiful daffodils, although we've not had time to plant anything. We wrote to Broll as you requested, to see if he might transfer some money to you without any loss. If he can't then he should send it to us with the other things. Don't you know what's happened to Rosl Fried? What's happening to all our family, Friedl, Martha, George, the Bäcker aunts, Mintscha, Fanny and Dori? Have you heard anything from Hans? Have you got Hugo Flamm's address?

First part of letter written by Lizzie, the second by Frank, to Marianne and Otto.

May 1940

My dearest family,

We are expecting news from you again this week, but I don't want to delay so I'm writing today. Mostly importantly because we got our photos, I am enclosing 2 of them for you. On the back of the photos are the explanations. I have 8 pictures which are not very good but nevertheless show how we live and how lovely it is here. Faithful Barry is sitting next to me, just as he follows me everywhere. He is so faithful, just like the other one we left in Czechoslovakia was, but he is still very young and very frightened. Today it's Saturday, we don't have as many visitors because it's so muddy around here and the weather is awful. Altogether it's very quiet at the moment. Yesterday we reached the minimum number of cows that we want to milk, that is, 6. In about 10-14 days' time the number will increase. The quality of the cream was already at its lowest point because we are already milking cows now which have calved and because of that, have a lot of milk. We've already written that the cream is weighed and when we first came, we had about 50-60 Kg per day, compared to only 10kg per day now. Next year it'll be more because we'll milk even more. Because of this I often stay at the house in the evenings and Frank does what is necessary.

I indulge myself altogether now as I get a rash on my hands from the milk, I've had it ever since I've been milking and it won't go away. It is a nuisance and besides, it doesn't look very nice and itches terribly. So I'm actually milking very little, only bringing the cows to Frank, washing the teats and taking them out again after milking. I've tried several tinctures and ointments, yet the only cure seems to be not to milk and when I do nothing all day and then milk again, I have the whole thing start up again. I've heard that many beginners experience this and eventually the problem disappears of its own accord. I hope this will be the case with me soon.

This week we went to town again and sent Tante Ada (sister of Lizzie's mother Marta, mother of her cousin, Otto Loeffler) news through the Red Cross that we are fine. It will be a joy for all our loved ones to hear directly from us and as the person in the middle, she will tell them all. I hope I will be in their thoughts on the anniversary of dear Papa's death (June), though unfortunately I couldn't acknowledge it on the right day. Unbelievable how time flies! How often we discuss how much he would've liked it here, the natural scenery is so wonderful. Wherever you are on the farm you can see the sea.

This week we made some sauerkraut and I had to remember how dear Papa told me, how they used to make it at home and then Frank made it the same way. If it turns out well we want to make it in bulk because you can't get it here and lots of people like it. In any event, you can only preserve it in glass here, because done the other way it wouldn't keep. We would have to try it. I would've never imagined that I would become such a farmer's wife, in such a short time. Frank is very adaptable so I had no hesitation, also he is physically strong. Today he was busy till he'd had enough. The best thing is that you are your own boss, no-one gives you orders. If you're tired one day then you take it easy.

I don't know if I wrote to you earlier, that one sunny day a Slovak called in to see us, and told us that he had been away from his homeland for 12 years - 10 years in Canada and because it was too cold for him there, he came here. He visited us again today and we agreed to spend an evening in town with him. Strangely enough, he got our address through his hairdresser where Frank also went once, by chance, because the hairdresser is a Dalmatian. So we came to meet and he befriended us. His name is Tischler, his father is a farmer.

This time I think I've really written everything I possibly could, but I hope that from the various letters you can form a picture of what we are doing and how we are. I write in every letter and must say it again, we are very contented and the only thing that would make us happier would be that there should be peace in the world again.

6/6/1940

My dearest

I have decided to write to you today, on this special day, when I know you are thinking of us. On these days which always mean something special, I am a bit depressed and churned up inside. I think its like that for everyone. I visualise in my mind the beautiful roses last year and look at the picture that we had taken, remembering the place where we had it taken to send to you.. On this day this year, we are busy with work, like every other day. Franz is working on the fence and I have baked a loaf of bread, and just read the paper, and now, an hour before milking, I'm writing to you. In the evening our neighbours are coming over, we've invited them. We'll talk shop again.

On Tuesday we visited a very nice town about 2½ hours drive from here, to see a farming exhibition. It was wonderful and very instructive for us. The show is held every year and you can see everything to do with farming in this country. At every stand there are people who explain all the exhibits. We bought a lemon tree and 3 orange trees there. Our garden is still very neglected because we had little time to put it in order. Now we want to begin. We also bought 2 bukis, which flourish here like in Rhodes, only not the same colour. The correct name is bougainvillia, we had the cutting when we came back from our honeymoon, for the sake of brevity we shortened the same to Buki. We also want to buy crocuses, we already have daffodils in the garden. The latest news from the farm is that we have entered into a contract to cultivate 600 plants of a fruit-bearing creeper and this is very promising.

Yesterday another cow calved, this month we're expecting another 2 calves, next month we don't know yet how many, because the heifers we'll buy will have to be added in. The cheque for the cream is quite small as we're only milking 7 cows, but in July it should improve. On the other side we're not buying anymore and we don't earn much more than what we need to live on, though we don't want for anything. In time, we will discover all the sources of supply. A few days ago I got some chives. I know where I can get some horseraddish, have a private source where I can get dill. Besides this, there's a Swiss here who makes wonderful sausages who supplies me once a week. The sausages from this place are quite spicy. We eat quite a lot of cottage cheese, which I make myself. I'm now going to start pounding sauerkraut and when gerkins are cheaper, to pickle some. I already have the recipe. So we have told you in every detail what makes us happy and the only thing missing is you. But this time will come soon, we are confident. Patience is the word, that's important now. We are always with you in spirit, and so I embrace you sincerely and remain,

Your

Written to Lizzie's mother Martha, by Lizzie on 6th June which was the anniversary of her and Franks wedding. They were married in 1937.

7th June 1940

Fr.Briess, Royal Rd., Massey-Henderson R.D.

My dears,

Today we received your letter of 7th May and hurry to reply. So much has happened since the time you posted your letter; but good things take time and so it will be a while yet before we achieve our goal and I have the utmost confidence, although at present the enemy has the upper hand. Now to the contents of your letter. You, dear Otto, write that Lizzie's letter of 14th April was brief, but this seems to be a mistake, because the brief letter was that written on 26th March. The letter of 14th April was quite detailed. Also, you don't mention anything about my detailed letter of 7th April.

In the meantime, you will have regularly received our letters of April and May. Please always acknowledge exactly letters you get from us. Concerning your Permit, you are in the meantime informed about it by the man dealing with the application. We have not yet heard, so maybe it's better, considering how long the application has been in, not to press the current situation. Now, as before, we quite definitely count on your coming here, as soon as possible, it's just a question of time. We've already got used to the idea that only after long and persistent efforts we'll succeed but after all, only the end result is important when you tally it all up, I'm convinced of that. As far as your Lift is concerned, probably nothing can be done about it at present and in any case it's too uncertain. You know my opinion of the Lift, we wrote to you; for the small amount of money we have established ourselves. These problems won't seem so important once you are here and it's definitely better to have the money, because whatever you start with here will cost money for capital investment, even if it's only the buying of poultry or various plantings, or whatever other initial costs. Consider your residence in USA as temporary as we did when we were in London. You have to go through these times and endure them and hold out. Now, when it is all over, I can tell you how terrible the time in London was for us, but we always held our heads high and endured. We had to give up the plan for Marta temporarily and so as soon as possible we want to set our plan for you in motion with full steam ahead. Tell Marta to write to you further. It's a bad business with Fredi and we're cracking our brains all day as to how we could help, there is no-one here we know who could spare such a large amount and even if we had such a sum it seems impossible to be able to remit it. It is terrible to have one's hands tied like this, to have to sit here and not to be able to help. How would it be if Fredi went to a South American country, if immigration is urgent? Couldn't you get a visa for him to go there? Dr.Hess and his family are still trying. They apparently had the opportunity to go to Hungary, but preferred to stay where they were.

Yesterday after a long silence, we had a detailed letter from Robert Briess, he is very happy in his occupation, has a very good job, got a 25% rise in salary. Stascha has a stomach ulcer which is unpleasant. They recently saw Robert Schrötter with his brother the painter and Edith Gottlieb. It always makes us happy to hear such news.

Otherwise, we anticipate that the Democrats will be voted in, with the consequence being active assistance to reinstate justice and humanity in the world. We wish you belatedly good wishes for your wedding anniversary.

When I hear the name Donath I clench my fist - those cheats did us out of nearly £500 - but these brothers will get their reward one day.

Write often and give us news of Friedl, Martha and all the others. Nothing's happened here since your last letter.

Written by Frank to Marianne and Otto.

The Lift was the way immigrants had their belongings sent out from Europe. Basically, it was a large trunk. Lizzie and Frank say they didn't have one sent out, but at some stage they must have because all their household linen, silver, etc .came here.

27/6/1940

My dear family,

Today we received your airmail letter of 18th May. It was censored in Hong Kong as we could see from the stamp. As we already wrote once before there is no point in sending mail here by air as mail takes a month to get here either way. They should really be introducing an air service between America and New Zealand and then it would be worthwhile. We also got the form for the application. As we wrote in our last letter, we contacted our agent and he writes that he would advise us to wait now, because no way is there any hope of a positive result. We must understand his point of view if you look at it objectively. You will certainly know far more about events than we do. It's very sad that we have to wait again. First we spent so long with MÄRTA's application and now we can't help anyone else. Nevertheless we are following it up relentlessly and as soon as the first opportunity presents itself, we won't let it pass. You know that from the beginning we discussed building our future together and so it will be. Up till now we achieved, although with great difficulty, everything we aimed for, so don't lose courage, look on your time there (in America) as a time of waiting and everything will yet have a happy end. And now I want to tell you that I was terribly happy when your letter arrived. The last letter which arrived about 3 weeks before, was very depressed and sad, and besides, you complained that we didn't report in sufficient detail. You can imagine how we reacted to that and how pleased we were to get your letter today. We can see you already have many friends and are leading quite a social life. That party with 8 people must have been very nice. I entered the recipe in my cookbook straightaway and will try it tomorrow. When Porsolts come to our place I will show them. Porsolts declined our invitation twice running, last week we were at their place and Saturday they were supposed to come to us. Some news! Dr. Hess is getting married soon. He chose a woman from Vienna who came here with her father. We hardly know her. Physically they are opposites. She is big and strong, a little Brünhilde, 19 years old, her mother is dead. We are thinking about what we can give as a wedding present. Immi still has the same job, although the second draughtsman was told to leave. He got another job straight away and Immi was quite pleased. Porsolts are very sociable. We quite enjoy their company as we are now quite close to them. We always talk a lot about you and I am firmly convinced that they would be genuinely pleased if you would come here although I am sure that Gerti is the type who always says the same things, whatever the company. We think you know Aufrichts - they say they know you. He was in Prague in the "společnost pro vývoz dřeva", anyway employed by a very big Company. I think he first came to London alone and she came later with the 4 year old daughter. Her father was deported to Poland and now works as a waiter etc in Lemberg. Her mother is with her parents-in-law in Frydek, her brother in Palestine. The news of various friends interests us very much. Marriages without strong roots must break up in these times and one can't wonder. People are nervous and can't always control themselves and it comes to a bad end. What you write about Adi and Friedl is precious little and we are burning for news. We are very worried that now there is no news to be had. We hear every week from Martuska and I'm sure she keeps writing at these intervals. I still have no answer to a letter written to her from here. Why you hear so little from Fredy in Brazil (Otto's brother), I am surprised. I am glad you always tell us about Friedl - it's very hard for us to write to him, specially. Anyway, we always have the same news for everyone. It's up to you to keep everyone informed of our experiences. It's great that you could borrow furniture from friends. We also have several things from our acquaintances here. That's how it is now, everyone helps everyone else. That way they don't have to pay storage and you have furniture. We are pleased you have such good neighbours, that is always pleasant and you will not be so lonely when Otto stays out so long. By the way, many cyclists have lost their jobs here because of the times and the employment situation. Most people choose our occupation now. And now some news of us:

We bought 5 sows a week ago which will be ready to give birth in August. Today we picked up a 2 year old boar that we will keep here to be ready to service our sows. Now we only want to buy a bull and then we will have finished buying animals. We've already got everything ready for the sows which are due in about 14 days. We've got them some hay so they can make a bed and they will be warm. At the moment we are only milking 6 cows, in 14 days there will be 4 more. I don't milk at all so that I can get rid of a rash on my hands, so we occupy our time a little differently. In the morning I stay upstairs and while Frank milks I tidy the house, prepare lunch and go down to the shed to clean up. Then I stay on the farm with Frank and we work together, i.e. I am the handyman helper - Fetch various tools, hold the wood when told to, etc. At present feeding the cows accounts for almost the whole morning. Today we checked on how our sauerkraut is getting on - I tell you it's just great. First we'll try a small amount, then we'll sell it. We want to do the same with pickled gerkhins. By the way, can you get them in America? I am also interested to hear if you can get Hungarian salami and how much it costs - my mouth waters! Can you get Rollmops? You can't get these things here. I suppose because it's too warm. Now I'll leave a few words for my better half, be well and in good spirits and hug and kiss everyone for us.

Dear Marietta,

My, you are a good girl, bringing home such good marks - your parents will be pleased. You must write to us some time and tell us which school you liked and who your girlfriends are. Is the teacher nice or was the teacher in Olmütz nicer?

Next please!

First I have a big request - You, dear Marianne, when you write by hand, please do it as clearly as possible, otherwise much is illegible. And now to your letter. Your connections to the chicken farmer are very useful. Here, we calculate about \$3 each as establishment costs, for a chicken farm. The neighbours with 2,000 hens, chicken farm, we seldom see, because we have too much to do on our own farm. You, dear Otto, will get information on all possible aspects of farming from the Agriculture Department in America, try to get whatever information you can, you never know what you might need and if it costs nothing it's a mezie (bargain not to be missed - Yiddish). As far as your Permit is concerned, I have thought it over and we will submit the application now, even if it's refused the first time it may even be refused twice, if we are patient, we will have the applications granted. And we can't know, perhaps they'll make a mistake and we'll get it on first application. On the production of cheese, perhaps you'll get better information about Quargel, Brimsen, etc (cheeses). I agree completely with you about the cadging of the fare, because how many of those who suffered the same fate as we did have we helped in the same way and with bigger contributions to make the move possible for them. In this respect you must have no pangs of conscience. As to Otto's questions about the castration of the boar - it worked perfectly. I didn't anaesthetize him at all. I didn't feed him for a day, before the operation I brought him some food and while he was eating I tied him up by the leg, another rope through the mouth, pulled between the horns.

Letter to Otto and Marianne, first part written by Lizzie, second part by Frank.

5 July 1940

My dearest

It seems like an eternity since we last heard from you. Best of all, I'd like to hear from you daily and I'd write to you every day too. There's always so much to report because things change so much on the farm, I never know what news to start with and then I write it all mixed up. Franz writes differently, but it takes him twice as long to write although his style is much better. Yesterday Porsolts came to visit - Aunt Rudi's relations. We have tried to work out the relationship, but so far we haven't been able to. Amongst other things she tells us about her brother who lost his job and decided to earn a living as a farm labourer. So we invited him to come and spend a few days with us to get some experience. So it's arranged that he'll move in with us in 3 days. Most of the people we know who have lost their jobs lately have gone to work on farms if they haven't got so far as to be able to buy a farm.

Yesterday we went to town and I bought meat, vegetables and fruit again for the whole week. We're starting to buy a few things for our garden, to get it organised. So today we bought a lawnmower. We've got a flowerbed and we're going to plant carnations in it. Round the edge we're going to put violets. We've put vegetables in behind the house. Generally the part of the farm which goes down to the road will look tidy as Franz is cutting the hedge which hasn't been done for 4 years. It is so thick he has to get at it with a saw and an axe. Today we're meeting people who came out on the same boat as we did, but they were born here. They were so delighted with what we told them about our coming out here that they accepted straight away when we invited them to come for the following Sunday. They are nice, elderly people, he is the director of one of the Museums here. It seems certain that this weekend we'll have lots of visitors. For such an occasion I usually make a cake. I'm very sorry that I don't have grandma's recipe book with me. I bake quite well now, I'm amazed myself at the icings, that I do them so well. Last time I had bad luck, I made a nut roulade and as I took it out of the tin the whole thing fell on the floor. As I had already made the chocolate cream, I used it to make a sachertorte out of it, that was very successful. I often think that what one experienced during one's childhood plays a part in influencing us in later life. Speaking of childhood, I am reminded that I have a birthday in a few days' time, and I can't believe that I'm 28 years old already. How time flies! I remember the discussion last year when we couldn't hear each other (on the phone from London?). When I compare our position now, with how it was then, how we've progressed - how much happier we are today. When I consider what we experienced in that year and how far we've come! That first year was definitely the most strenuous - the beginning is the most difficult. Today the way ahead seems clear. We're really happy and live very well.

A few days ago we bought a sow and a boar. We're going to sell the old boar on Wednesday. There's always a coming and a going here. It's already the 6th today and we got a letter from Rosl dated 25th April. She writes that she heard from Isi, she had just received a letter from her children which she wanted to answer straight away, meanwhile she had sent another letter in which she complained about not having had any news since 8th December. We write to Marianne every week, so we assume that she is located in the most favourable position. We've written often to Ernst Iachs in Zurich but have received no reply. We think he might have left for America already. We have been asking for a long time for Otto Loeffler's address in Cochabamba. Up to now the postal connection with South America has been very unreliable, despite this we would like to be exchanging letters with him, as we could tell him interesting things about our lives and he could tell us about his life. From July we can write by airmail. We correspond regularly with Robert Briess. A letter posted Saturday midnight arrived Monday evening. Isn't that quick? The plane goes once a week. I'm pleased to hear that so many friends are here - we're all in the same boat. I'd like to meet all of them, but I don't know where to find them. Fr. Drucker is in Wellington, Marianne's friends got news about their parents through her. As I wrote in my last letter,

I lit a ^(anniversary) Jahrzeit candle for Papa on 18th June now knowing the exact date, I'll do it in future on the 11th. I was really happy with your letter today because it was like a birthday letter. As we didn't get anything when the last ship came, I thought I wouldn't hear from you, and then something came anyway.. That's the best birthday present I could have. In the same mail I'm writing to Rudy Broll now, to ask whether Susie shouldn't come to us. Many children are coming now, from there. Marianne's friends are also taking a child of friends of theirs from over there. I hope that you are getting my letters regularly and are reassured. For today, we both embrace and kiss you with all our hearts.

Yours grateful,

Written by Lizzie to her mother Martha.

12th July 1940

Dear Emmy,

Don't think I've forgotten you. Only I don't know where to begin. I hope you've had news of me from other people. I often think that you will remember how strange it is that I predicted things so accurately. You are the only person with whom I spoke quite openly about the future. Also, I was with you more than anyone else, before my departure. Today, barely 1½ years later, we're far from our homeland, quite settled in a new country, but now after being here 10 months, I can't call it a strange country. We feel so comfortable and only wish that everyone else making plans should be so lucky. Everyone working on farms here is so contented, although many have lost their jobs and left the city for the country. There's always work in this country, so we have become farmers too. We live in quite a nice house which has every comfort we could imagine. We have a lovely car, nearly as nice as the one we had before and even a Barry who is just as faithful as the first one. We have furnished the house as our previous one was furnished. You know we had photos from which we had the furniture made. Of course,,we work hard, it doesn't bother us anymore. We can see we're making progress and that encourages us even more.

By the time our families get here, we'll have a beautiful, model farm. I hope you and Stierl are well. I would be very happy to hear from you soon. My address - Briess, Royal Rd., Massey, Henderson, N.Z. Regards to you and all our good friends.

From your

Letter to a friend who is referred to with the formal "Ihr".

12 July 1940

My dearest family,

We hope for a letter from you tomorrow, but I'll answer it next time. Today we're going to town and I'll be able to post this off right away. In the last few days lots has happened. Franz is fencing again, he's got to get it finished otherwise it'll be too wet and he won't be able to get the wooden posts, because you have to go into the bush for the posts and in the wet weather they can't get the trucks through. As we've had 14 days of lovely weather, the ground is drier. They say, that it won't rain much anymore this winter and we've had pretty good weather up till now. More news: 2 of our sows gave birth. One on the 10th, the other today. The litters were not big. The first only had 2, the other, 4. Because there were so few, we shut the first 2 up with the second sow and now she's feeding all 6. We mated the first sow with the boar again and hope that she'll be pregnant soon. That way we'd save time. When a sow feeds her piglets, she needs so long to suckle them that you can't mate her ^{for} 6-8 weeks. These are sows which have only bred for the first time and you don't usually expect large litters. Nevertheless, we were hoping for 4 piglets from each sow. In the next few days our third sow should give birth but she'll certainly only have 2-3 piglets because she's not very fat. Our cows and heifers are also taking time. Up till now nothing's happened. All 3 cows might calve in the next week. That's all the news for the present., of our work on the farm and our animals.

As I wrote in my last letter Hans Hess was supposed to visit us. He's been here for a week now. As he lost his job, he wanted to get work as a farm labourer and we offered to show him the ropes. He is very willing and so he is quite suited to this kind of work. By accident we heard from our neighbour Mr. Cane, who came to play cards at our place the day before yesterday, that there is some building going to start nearby and so Hans went and got a job as a builder. He earns as much as he did before and lives with us. He has breakfast and dinner with us, pays for it, of course. Saturday and Sunday he doesn't work and so he helps Franz on the farm. When we go to town we take him with us, he himself has a motorbike. He is a very pleasant quiet person and doesn't disturb us. Of course, through this, we see more of Porsolts. As well, Hans has enlisted in the Army and it'll be about 2-3 months before he's called up. Lots of people have enlisted here, not only Czechs.

By the way, have I already told you that every afternoon from 5 p.m. our time to 7 a.m. London time I listen to the Czech broadcast. They broadcast 3 times a day and always begin with the National Anthem. The first time we heard it, we felt peculiar, now we're used to it. How did your birthdays go, did you celebrate? We didn't do anything, I did the washing. Tempera Mutantur.* My birthday present, Barry, is thriving and today for the first time he brought the cows in with the other dogs. He has grown already and is a very beautiful animal. He's on the farm all day, rain doesn't bother him and consequently his fur is fabulous.

Today I tried your recipe for chocolate layer cake. I used butter instead of margarine, as the margarine here is not like what we're used to, and butter is easier to get. It turned out very runny and after cooking for half an hour it was only as firm as a cheese omelette. I think something went wrong. Please send me the recipe in more detail. Actually I'm really grateful for all the recipes as I bake quite often and we like the variety.

I would very much like the recipe for the cream that you fill kremschnitten with. I really only have a few recipes here. We're enclosing 2 photos of our house. One is our straw furniture, orange and yellow combined. The room itself has bright green walls. The one of the bed in the bedroom is only to show that we have arranged it as in our previous home. Every day we remind ourselves again and again how well off we are. How happy we would be if only you could share it with us. What a wonderful, troublefree life we live here, as long as we don't think of our families. And when don't we think of them?

* Tempera mutantur - "times change", meaning that in Czechoslovakia they had had a maid who did the washing, cooking, mending etc and they themselves had had much more of a social life.

We're happy to report that we've already become friendly with a family who is quite well known here. That we see each other quite a lot and they come to our place too. They have a large music business, we bought our radio and frig from them. They are not in our age group, they have a daughter of 19 and a son, 22 years old. They spent their last holidays in America for 8 months, and travelled around by car. When will we be able to do that? But I must say really, that I don't feel like travelling, not even to Sydney I'm so pleased to be able to stay in one place. Besides it's more difficult from here and many seasoned travellers are seasick. I think that if I could visit Robert in Sydney once, we would pop over by plane. 8 hours flying isn't too long. Now I'll close, I know you'll say "she's got nothing else to do but make travel plans", but no, it's not like that. At the moment I'm more interested in how big the sow's litter will be and hoping that the cows get pregnant quickly. So, my dears, hugs and kisses from both of us,

Your
Lizzie

The latest is that I have Marietta's photo on the mantelpiece, of course, everyone asks who it is and then we begin our whole "story" and the end is always "but we hope to have them here very soon and they'll tell you better than we can."

21st July 1940

My dearest (to Marta),

The day before yesterday we had one of the loveliest days since we left, brought about by our letters of 16 and 30 May. Finally you will have had news of us too and even photos. We knew you'd be pleased to get the photos so we had more copies done and enclosed photos of us and the farm so you could build up a picture of it in your mind. I know how much a photo means in these times. Unfortunately I haven't got a good one of dear Papa, perhaps it would still be possible to get one.

I can imagine that people are surprised at how I've changed. If they were here, those same people wouldn't be surprised, as everyone works here and every woman as well, whether it's in a shoe factory, chocolate factory, or as a waitress. As soon as you arrive you give up the European outlook and after a few months you ask yourself "how could I have lived there without working?" You have quite a different outlook in many things. Farming is the most important thing - to be physically strong enough is the key to overcoming the obstacles. We had confidence in this great change of lifestyle and from the beginning were lucky to have chosen this occupation. As an amateur you can't possibly imagine how diverse life on the farm is, especially when you go into it to the extent that we have. Franz's skills in his previous work, especially as a buyer, stand him in good stead. You have to be clever and have initiative, to be prepared to persist, and lastly, patience is important, to be able to understand the animals.

The first few months we were very tired and even now, there are days when we are quite tired, but altogether we can say that we've got used to it in the seven months we're here. For instance, it's nothing for us, after a full day's work, to go to town to the cinema or to be visiting friends till midnight. The cows mustn't miss out; they have to be milked regularly morning and evening. In one of the April letters you mention a lady who came here, you heard about her from Oberbezirksrat (Superintendent of the District) Mandl. I met her at Porsolts about 14 days ago but it only came out the day before yesterday that she was the lady you wrote to me about. She asked me, quite in passing, if I perhaps knew Dr. Mandl and then we worked it out when I mentioned my maiden name. We were very pleased. The lady is living with Porsolts, (Mrs Porsolt has taken over) and she'll visit us at the farm when she has the opportunity. There are no accidents in this life.

You wonder how we organise the work as we've never mentioned assistants. We haven't mentioned any because we don't have any. Labourers are very expensive here, that is, the wages that you have to pay are too high, and we don't want to pay the money out. Our neighbour gives us help if we need it and Franz helps him and so we don't pay each other anything. You ask if I need anything which you have over there. China, glass, crockery, are all very expensive. You can get everything here, from the best quality to the biggest rubbish, but even the rubbish is expensive. Also stockings are extremely dear. I still have about 15-18 new pairs. Repair of stockings is very expensive too.

The cheapest things are of wool and knitted clothes of every kind. Mornings and evenings we need pullovers and jackets. Did I tell you that Franz wears vests in winter and summer, he even sleeps in one under his pyjamas. I thank you very much for your birthday wishes, which arrived several days late. It would've been a real coincidence if they'd arrived on exactly the right day. We didn't celebrate particularly. I got my present, Barry, a few weeks early, we had flowers from our garden. My birthday happened to be on a day when I had lots of washing to do. I hope that the world will soon be at peace again, so that we can build our future together; you can't be happy when your families have such great worries.

We wrote to Otto about 14 days ago and are looking forward to the reply. You wrote in your last letter that you put on so much weight. We can't complain in that respect. We have everything and I'm very happy with my kitchen, despite that we haven't put on weight. We each have lost 8-9 kg since we left. Mostly people here put on weight, the refugees, I mean. We are on our feet from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. so we are slim. I hope very much that you're getting regular mail from us now. We'll send lots more pictures. Now we're only going to write every fortnight as we want to send the mail by air. The new

14th July 1940

My dear family,

The clipper leaves in a few days so I must chatter a bit quickly. You will get our letter of 12 July much later than this one, perhaps some things will be repeated in it. We are in full swing at the farm. We've had good weather again for the past 14 days, only now and then a shower, the ground is dry again, so I've begun to make fence posts again - I cut down several big trees which were in my way so in 2-3 days the next fence will be finished. It is one of the most important fences. As soon as the farm is properly fenced we'll send you a diagram but that'll take a while yet.

Since we last wrote, 2 of our sows gave birth. I helped at the birth, in that I cut the umbilical cord off the newborn piglets which were barely 15 cm long. They were too long and could become infected, if they get dragged along the ground. The litter was unfortunately not big, perhaps due to the advanced age of the boar, which we've since sold. It was very difficult to get him on the truck which came to collect him, first he jumped a 120cm fence and then he quite easily swung aside a heavy gate and me with it, after he had broken it. I'm glad he's gone. One sow had 2 and the other 4 piglets, but 2 from the last litter who were very weak, died. So we gave all the piglets to the 1 sow and gave the other sow to the boar.- From one of our earlier letters you'll know that we have a new 2year old boar, a splendid animal, which we got quite cheaply, so the sow would get pregnant again quite quickly. But the sow wasn't pleased, made a whole in the temporary wire netting, and took off. Tomorrow we're getting her back. Yesterday another cow calved, tomorrow another is due and we're expecting about another 10 this month. In the meantime we planted 3 orange trees and 1 lemon tree and besides, 2 buckis (bougainvillias) that didn't flourish in Olmütz. The cattledog has already eaten one bucki for which he earned himself a sound thrashing. We planted everything in the garden in the front of the house, dug a hole, brought cow dung into the garden and used it to plant the little trees. We would like to be eating our own oranges already.

Yesterday we sold 6 calves, as we don't want to keep any young animals and for the scale of our farm we have quite a lot of dairy cows. In the first years we need the money to be able to put back into the farm. We got a good price for the calves, but it's not confirmed until the calves are paid for and taken away. They are only sold at the ticket office. Mrs. Porsolt's brother Hans Hess has been here with us for a week as he lost his job; he wants to get onto a farm and learn the basics from us, just imagine, from us, the amateur farmers. The other day our neighbour came over for a card party and he, Jim, mentioned there was some building going on nearby so Hans went and promptly got a job earning the same money as he was in his previous job. It's only about a mile from here and he boards with us. He doesn't work Saturday and Sunday and makes himself useful on the farm. There's enough work here.

What's Toni doing? Please send him our heartfelt best wishes for his birthday. Please give this letter to Friedl to read as well because I can't write directly to him. How did you celebrate your birthday? What's happening with your money that Mr. Broll was looking after? Dear cousin Hans hasn't answered my last registered letter, what a gentleman. Who was his business partner? We're burning with curiosity as to what Liesl, Gretl, Georg and our parents, Rosl Fried, Mintscha, Thilde, Doris, the Bäcker and Kohlen aunts are all doing. We haven't heard from Fredi* in Brazil for ages. Now I'll wait with the end of this letter, to see if a letter comes from you tomorrow, then I can answer it straightaway before posting this.

Written by Frank to Marianne and Otto.

*Otto's brother Fredi had gone to Brazil.

5/12/1940

My dear Family,

It's all long, long time since we had news from you. We expected mail on the Monterey on the 25th November and then on the Mariposa (28th November) however, other people didn't get any either. Perhaps it's because of the coming holidays, as in the New Year when the letters we posted in October and November were returned in January, this time last year, with the note saying that they couldn't be sent. I don't know why I get so upset about these things. I can't change them.

Today's Franz's birthday, a day like any other, we don't give each other presents, so we can save the money. At the same time it's a year since we bought the farm. Now we're much further on, we know a bit about our job and can work things out better. We've paid enough for the experience but even if it only half pays off, it's still worth it. So with much effort, we sold the tractor with heavy hearts, having lost 50%. You can understand how much that hurt us, but we needed the money and could see that it wasn't worth carrying on with it so we got rid of it as soon as we could.

Today we started haymaking almost 5 weeks earlier than last year, hopefully God willing, the weather will be good. We're going to make it into bales again. The wet hay will dry out till next Tuesday and then more hands are coming. A couple of weeks ago, we had a misunderstanding with the neighbour who's been helping us so much, but it's all O.K. now. At the time he wasn't very nice.

And now I'll report about myself. Unfortunately I don't feel very well, which is very difficult, mainly because all the work in the house, cooking, milking, everything falls on Franz's shoulders. I spend half the day in bed or on the couch, am very tired and feel generally sick. So we intend to take on a refugee to do the housework for a little while, but I don't think anyone will want to work on a farm, so we'll persevere ourselves.

On Monday we sold a few cows, so we're barely milking 32 cows again so Franz has less to do. We see few people, mostly Porsolts, Altmanns, the Viennese. Gerty is very nervous and makes me nervous too, but besides that she gossiped around town about how I'm feeling, the whole of Auckland knows already. She says that the doctor let the cat out of the bag, but it seems unlikely to me. I was very angry about it, but didn't mention it to her. I recognise the consequences. Auckland is a place full of gossips and what can you talk about to people you see often?

In 2-3 weeks, I intend to bottle about 50 jars of plums. I'm borrowing the machine, the plums are growing on the farm. I'm paying the lady in plums, for the borrowing of the machine - funny, isn't it? I planted dill to use with gerkins, but this year unfortunately, I can only make them for us, I don't want to overdo it, but it would definitely be a good business.

(Lizzie)

Speaking of gerkins - another 2 sows had litters, both had 8, but one lay down on top of a little piglet and squashed it. We're going to sell this sow and 2 others next week as we now have too many sows. Recently I had toothache and went to town to see the dentist. 1½ hours later I came home without my tooth. There was a big abscess on the root.

We cabled to Broll a fortnight ago and yesterday got the answer as follows: "The Bank asked again for permission, if granted, send amount at once" and so we have to wait. Have you heard from Hans? For Eric, I can't do what he wants here in New Zealand and I've written to Australia, please tell him that as I'm too busy at present to write to him.

Now I'd like to get the hay in the shed, hopefully it'll be done by Friday. Then I'll have time to help a couple of other people next week and then I can get back to my normal work routine. What's happening with Friedl, Martha, Liesl, Gretl, Rosl Fried, Toni? Send love to all the family, from us both and hugs and kisses to you as well.

From your Fralis

service will deliver the mail in 4 to 5 days.
Great grandmother would have said "the world is beautiful"
For today, many, many kisses from
your Lizzie

Regards to everyone whom you meet.

What's news with Marietta, you don't write much about her. What does she look like?

Dear Everyone,

Lizzie's asleep already

Before I write about our news, I want to comment on some points in your letters of 9th October, 19th October and 2nd December. We congratulated Friedl in August through the Red Cross and you too. Richard Repper was always a capable ^{fellow} as he has proved again. Neither you nor friend Adilo Fried have written for a long time what Toni's doing and what is actually the matter with him. When he wrote that he would like to come here I wrote to him right away but have never heard from him since. I would really like to know where he is, what he's doing and how his wife is. Adilo wrote in one of the 2 letters we got from him, the first sign of life from him in a long time, that Suchy wants to buy the business.* I am now as I was before, definitely of the opinion that we shouldn't sell, we could only put the money in an investment account and wouldn't be able to get at it and then after the war, you get nothing for it.

You enquire about our egg production. Because the hens haven't been laying much and because we'd have stopped in 1-2 months anyway as it's Autumn, we sent them to market today and hope they got a reasonable price. Now we've just got the 60 young chickens that are developing well and if all goes well, they'll start laying in about 1 month.

As far as Broll is concerned I would like to have the money here first. I'm writing to him now, to send me the important data which would enable me to take some steps through the New Zealand House in London or you, through the U.S.A Embassy in London. Once the money is here we shall first of all try to send it to you, providing a permit from the New Zealand Reserve Bank can be obtained. Only if that should prove impossible I might leave part of the money in the Bank and would invest the balance in livestock so as not to put all the eggs in one basket. Whether it is going to be fowls, pigs or cows, I don't know yet, because if you want to put money into poultry it does not mean that you just have to buy fowls, but you have to build the necessary fowl houses and fowl runs and last but not least, it would be difficult to manage the extra work if you have, besides all this, to milk cows, feed pigs and do all the other farm work. In any case I shall do my best to have the money secure, because this is the main thing nowadays.

It's a shame you can't do anything with Synovac. In any case I'll write to Pepschl Groag who's got the plans from Dr. Donath as solicitor for Synovac, but I haven't much hope. If Fritz Low had taken my advice he could be with you now, I could've organised it for him from London. Did Toni mention what to do with his money in London? I wanted to try and get it here, but it was too risky. What's happening to your land in Palestine? What do you hear from Gretl and Fredi? He hasn't answered the letter we wrote 10 months ago. Federer must have some money, if he didn't mention it, you must have repaid the amount you borrowed. I have nothing to say about Hans, but I'll write to Uncle Dori. I'll write to Robert eventually, and tell him to keep in touch. He's quite funny about writing. Adilo hit the nail on the head with our maternity hospital, I don't know how. I spent the last 14 days on Christmas holiday being really lazy, after a good year's work, attending to milking, chickens and pigs, that is I did nothing from 11 till 4p.m. every day.

* in Czechoslovakia

Otto's siblings

7/1/1941

My dear family,

It's along, long time since we had a letter from you. You must follow closely the departure dates of the ships and post your letters in time. Your letter of 9th October arrived after 2 months. Though you never mention when you receive our letters, it seems to us that it makes very little difference if we send it by clipper and in future we'll send our letters by ship. We have to post mail at least a week before the clipper leaves so there's time for it to be checked by the censor. Then it often happens that the arrival of the clipper is scheduled for a certain date and is delayed by bad weather and then it can take 4 weeks before the mail is in your hands.

We were really delighted with your letters and also the ones from Adefried. (Adi and Friedl, Frank's parents) What's happening to Marta, we haven't heard from her since 15th September. Interesting that they don't mention each other. We assume that it's intentional. Nevertheless, for us it's upsetting to be without news like that.

Even if our letters seem fairly boring, at least they're signs of life. We enjoy with you every beautiful day you experience. New York must be so wonderful. How big is Paterson and how far is it from New York? We've already described how we spent the holidays. Since then we've had Christmas and New Year. We couldn't get away then and couldn't do much as we were only free from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. We went swimming at the beach, usually picked up our Viennese friends. Steins came to our place and were good company again. On the 3rd we got your letter of 2nd December. How happy I was to get it! So now you know our great news. Thank you Marianne, for all your good advice, I will follow it as closely as possible. The doctor didn't give me any medicine for my cough, though I asked him for some. I feel much better now, except some days when I'm very tired. I'm sick now and then, but it's not bad, I don't make a big thing of it as I'm used to it.

As we couldn't get household help at the time, and as I felt better, we stopped trying to get anyone and I managed the household on my own. As of last week I'm baking bread again and doing the meals too. Of course, I'm milking as well. We've exchanged jobs because Franz had a sore finger, it had to be lanced, it was the index finger on his right hand, so for a few days I had to do the milking myself and Franz only assisted. Now it's almost better.

On Christmas Eve and on the 31st, 2 sows gave birth and had 13 piglets between them. Our friends say it means good luck, we hope so. Yesterday I found a four-leafed clover for the first time in my life. So many good luck portents. We're sending a couple of photos of our Christmas holiday. You never mentioned the photos of our house, did you get them? And do you happen to know how many there were? Which photos did Adi mention? I had a couple of extra copies made and I'll send them in due course.

We think constantly about the baby, everything revolves around its arrival. When I come home from Hospital a friend will come and help me. She is the one at whose farm we stayed last year to learn the basics of farming. She has a baby too and will advise me on all the important things. I'm reading quite a lot about Mother and Child and various other good books. At present I'm reading "Gone with the Wind" - a really good book. I've already begun knitting. This friend, her name is Edith Fürst, is giving me all the important things so that I won't have to buy much. Things for children are extremely expensive here. Of course, it's quite different, for a mother who does everything herself, from one who has a nurse. Lots of our friends here have children, born here, but we'll have the second Czech baby. The first Czech baby will be born in January. The people are from Prague, they got married here.

From last week there has been the possibility of writing to our parents through Cooks, they'll certainly take a long time to get there, but despite that we want to use this way of sending birthday wishes to both mothers. We also wrote through the Red Cross, but never got a reply. I haven't heard from Otto Loeffler in reply to my air letter either. You are uncouth! I laughed a lot at Otto's remarks. You are a pig, but it was funny. I'll close for today, heartiest greetings,

Your

Lizzie

3rd February 1941

My dearest family,

Already 3 weeks have passed since we had your "big" mail - altogether 9 letters. Of course there was even a letter written in October. The exchange of mail is not too good at the moment and so I'm asking you to follow closely the departure dates and not to post letters at the last minute. We ask you that in every letter, because you're the only ones who can tell us what we most want to hear.

About 14 days ago we wrote to my mother as we had an opportunity to do so. We don't think she'll get the letter before April, though. We intend to send Adi birthday wishes in the same way, in a few days' time.

Here, the busy season is over now, our lives are quieter, that means we're not so busy. Slowly Autumn is approaching. Until 2 days ago we had 3 weeks of daily rain, the milk yield didn't increase, but stayed at the same level. If it had continued as hot and dry as it was, the cows would've suffered and been dry. So we're still quite happy with the milk yield as it is and hope it'll stay that way till March.

A few days ago we sold our piglets, as we didn't want to keep them over the winter. 20, all told. The hens we bought as 2 month old chickens have already begun to lay. We'll be able to sell eggs again within the next 14 days.

I'm very proud of my first lot of salted gerkins. They turned out well. This week I'll do 100 more and I'll also do 2 dozen mustard gerkins. They keep longer. As well as these, I bottled 20 jars of plums. As you can see I'm taking good care of our stomachs. I enjoy it and am very proud when things come out well. Of course I've also got plum jam.

You ask after various friends in your letters. Jonny Hess is on a farm again and seems happy with his job, as next year he intends to do share milking, that is, he is employed on a farm and receives a percentage of the profit. Gerty told me recently when I met her in town that later on she wants to get rid of her pensioners and get a job. She'd very much like to work in a library, but of course, that would be difficult. Also, they want to sell the house and buy an apartment house and let rooms to make some money. They haven't been out to see us for a long time, we usually phone each other on Wednesday and exchange news. She always sends you her regards and is not cross with you with not writing as she always gets news from us. Steins came out over Christmas and we spent some lovely days together. We like them very much and if we lived in town we'd see them much more often. We've also become very close friends with the Viennese couple who live close by. We're always together on Sundays and usually once in the evenings during the week as well. I often slip around to see her in the afternoon also. We heard in the last few days that compatriots of ours intend to buy the farm where our Viennese friends work and naturally they would employ the man. That would secure our friend's job and we're very pleased to have them so near by.

As you can see, we have got good friends here too, which of course, contributes to our contentment. Funnily enough, she was born in Olmütz and Waldek, the photographer, is her uncle. So she and Franz have a lot of friends in common as well as the fact that she had a sports school in Vienna, so that's something else they have in common. Besides, both men's present jobs are very interesting. She is a lively Viennese woman, gay and attractive and we have much in common.

We're glad to hear good news from you, especially that Otto is busy and successful and we are full of admiration. How's Marietta getting on at school and does she mind the weather? =Does she have lots of friends? Of course we were particularly delighted with Friedl's letter and will write to him. At last we had news of Fredy and his new wife. So we feel happier though many things are still unclear. The main thing is that they're happy together. Have they got a house? What do you hear from Hans (cousin, in London)? Won't he come to New York? America used to appeal to him, above all it was closer. What will he do with the 2 children? *He'll already regret *Hans's sister had 2 children who were sent to England on the children's transport. Their parents died in concentration camp and Hans became responsible for them.

Bringing in the hay was real slavery, once I didn't get to bed till 2 a.m. and another time 1 a.m. As well as this I helped several neighbours with their hay people who had helped us and from whom we borrowed various machines. Doesn't it seem strange that it's beautiful summer weather here at Christmas and New Year and we go swimming in the sea. For a long time now, it's been lovely weather, no rain although at the same time the grass isn't so fresh and the milk yield not so great. The yield is about one third of last months and has slipped back from the same time last year, so we haven't as much skim-milk for the pigs. We have 3 sows, 4-4month old pigs and tomorrow we're selling 7 fattened pigs. We will still have 5 breeding sows, a boar, 9 big pigs which will be ready for sale in about 2 months, 8 5-week olds and 13 born at New Year, so we still have all sorts. The pigs require a lot of maintenance and you can spend hours observing them and laughing at them. Recently another sow was due to give birth. She didn't do too well last time, she smothered 3 little ones, so I locked her in the sty so she would have her babies there. It was so funny and she brought 8 raven black little piglets into the world, none bigger than 15 cm. Today they are 5 weeks old and thriving well. Because it was very hot in the sty at that time I wanted to make her feel more comfortable, and went down with a bucket of water to tip over her to cool her down. She came right away as she usually does so I can give her a scratch. I tipped some water over her head, upon which she thanked me with a deep "uff uff". What does she do then? She turns round, showing me her rear end so I could cool off that end. But that wasn't all, after I'd done that, she lay down on her back, stretched out all 4 legs and showed that she wanted her tummy doused too. I nearly wet my pants laughing. The 2 sows which were to give birth next, I let them do it in the open because it was too hot in the sty. I sat in the heat for 2 hours with one sow, to supervise the birth and eventually to help. Everytime a little one slipped out the sow stood up, had a pee, lay down and the next one came. Our neighbour who happened to be passing, remarked shortly, "oiling for the next". The last born was a bit too big and she had problems, so I helped and brought it out slowly and gently. So, on New Year's Day we had 13 little piglets from the 2 sows. Hopefully that means pork!

So I could go on, telling many such stories about all the animals. Yesterday we got rid of our bull(steer) which as you know, we'd only hired. To the farewell he wore the ring through his nose and a heavy chain through it, which I gave him as whenever there was a cow on heat in the neighbourhood he leaped elegantly over the 1½m high wooden fence. Tomorrow I'm starting to work on the farm again. There are a number of jobs, large and small, to do, that I can't describe easily in writing, but which take a lot of time to do and are important to get the farm in good order. They take a long time to do, mainly because they cost a lot of money and we've invested our cash in the farm and anything left over from our income we have to put aside for contingencies. Besides, at the end of last month we had to pay £70 mortgage interest and principal and that already tears a big hole in our finances. Last week, Mr. Specht, who has a good job in Wellington wrote to us. He has married a shop assistant from Zavodna there who came out after him after the war began. For today, all the best,

Yours,

If it wasn't already 11p.m. and I didn't have to get up early I would've gossiped for another page. Next time a bit more.

Letter written by Frank to Otto and Marianne.

9/5/1941

My dear family,

We hadn't heard from you for such a long time up till today, that I decided to send a registered letter. I'm sure you've received our detailed letter of the 27th April in the meantime, although we sent it by sea.

I'm sorry to say I received yesterday the news from the Bank that your application to send the money to Palestine has been refused without mentioning any special reason. After that I went to the Bank again yesterday and made a new application for permission to support you monthly and I hope that at least this will be possible, considering your situation and that Otto has only occasional work. I applied for £10 monthly. I am looking for someone who has money in Palestine which he cannot get out. This he could give to Mull and I could pay him here. As soon as I find somebody I shall immediately ask permission of the Bank here which should be an easier matter.

Last week we got a letter from Otto Loeffler, Cochabamba, Bolivia, a cousin of Lizzie's, who wrote saying that Marta has to sell her house, which she had to leave some considerable time ago. She's now living with her sister, - Brno-Julánev, Postamt 18, Taborská 193 near Ing.Kirschner. The last news we had from her was 23rd February. Presumably the pensions are still being paid and they should have enough to eat. Lots of people are interested in getting visas but unfortunately we can't do a thing.

Now as always, there's loads of work to do on the farm, although I'm only milking once a day, as the cows are drying out before calving. For the past 2 days we have had houseguests. Our Viennese friends who were working on a farm nearby came to stay as the farm they were on is being sold in about 4-6 weeks and he lost his job. I found him another job in the neighbourhood and they live with us and help on the farm, as he finishes work by 4p.m. We have made various plans together for developing the farm with their help, but it depends on various considerations, nothing is definite yet. It depends mainly on whether we can get a loan of £400-500.

Otherwise things are fine, we're still happy and hope you are too. Please write dilligently, hugs and kisses to all of you,

Franzl and Lizzie.

I've only given you an outline of the news, as the Postman will be here any minute and I want to give him this letter, so that the Censor will have enough time to study it.

not having followed us here. We hear little from Robert, apparently he has little news. In the next few days we're expecting mail from you, actually we were hoping it would be here today. Of course it's a disadvantage that you won't have a reply for 2 months. For today, hugs and kisses to you all from the bottom of my heart. I am your sincere,

Lizzie

Dear Mulls,

Firstly thank you for your birthday wishes which arrived 5 weeks late, but I don't mind that, I know your letter was underway and even if you didn't send the birthday wishes, I know that you're thinking about me on my birthday. We couldn't celebrate my birthday specially, as we were in the middle of haymaking and weren't finished till 8 p.m., then started bringing the bales of hay to the hay shed. At 2 a.m. we finished as a neighbour helped, as is the custom here. An hour later it started raining so I was pleased that the hay was under cover. A week later we did the rest of the hay. As we had so much grass for haymaking, I sold about 40,000m as grass, got 100 bales of hay for it, which I sold. You may ask why we don't have more cows, if we have so much superfluous grass. Firstly, as Lizzie is not always well, we can't and don't want to milk more cows and also, there would be too much work involved with doing other things on the farm, and also because we're broke, and above all, cows aren't cheap enough at present. Since we finished haymaking I've slacked a bit with the work on the farm which I really shouldn't do.

The first year we were here I hoped that in 2 years I'd have the farm in tip-top order, but it seems that it will take longer and so we'll do it slowly and hopefully will eventually reach our goal. In this occupation you don't get rich, but we've no ambition to be so, we live quietly, happy and content, earn our living - in the first few years you can't save anything because all the money you make goes back into the farm, but in the long run its money well invested.

Now to your letters of 19 and 25 November. The football match in Philadelphia must have been wonderful. We haven't been to any sports events, though they play a lot of rugby, soccer and tennis here and the main sport is horseracing, there are races every week. Sport is held in high regard here.

You must've received the promised newspapers in the meantime. I was absolutely delighted with the letters from Friedl, Adi and Toni and I'll reply in detail. I wrote to Eric Briess yesterday, there's no business for him here at present. I've written to him clarifying our relationship with Hans as he brought it up in his letter. At the moment, the news from here is that there is a beautiful comet with a splendid, majestic tail, or train, I don't know what you call what a comet has. Anyway, I study it closely every evening, you never know, maybe I'll discover something.

I understand completely your attitude to Hans as to being fair. I was really pleased to read that the relationship between Irene and our parents turned out so well in the end. I wish you would have favourable news from Broll about the money but I do not think that your suggested way will comply with their currency regulations. We have not heard from Broll since. I can well imagine Erni Siegel on Mt. Carmel, but where is the street for Grete to sell herself? She said she would even prostitute herself for the child. What's happening to your land on Carmel? Couldn't it be used to your advantage, by leasing it?

Toi, toi, toi (fingers crossed), more good business, stay well, our love,

Your Franzl

My dearest Mama,
 In January I wrote to you and hope that you got the letter in time for your birthday. That was the intention. We haven't had any news from Marianne since February so we actually don't know much about you either. It is quite strange that we haven't had any mail from them. 14 days ago we got the first letter from Otto which had taken 5 weeks to reach us. I got your new address from him. You can imagine how these changes concern us. We beg you to hold your head high, hopefully the time will come soon when we can help you. We want to start it up again, we should have the chance soon. Otto writes little about himself, sends news of Ernst Lachs, for whom things are not going very well. We would like to help him, but unfortunately it's not possible from here, at the moment. A short while ago we got a letter from Uncle and Aunt Berta. They are quite well, live with the children in the country. They were very keen for news of relatives. We are always very sorry for them, they both always write, Aunty praising everything, Uncle adding bits on. The weather can't be very good, he complains about colds. I am writing to Rudi and Selma at the same time as I'm writing this letter. We also get mail now and then from Rudi and Selma (Broll). Franz always exchanges advice with H.W. Last time round he sent us his recipe for pickling gerkins. A long time ago I tried putting some gerkins to soak, but it didn't work, besides it wasn't much use as you can't get dill here. The climate isn't suited to it. The sweet and sour gerkins turned out quite well. The massergurken have already been eaten up and I still have about 11 jars of mustard gerkins. They keep well and we treat ourselves with them. I am so pleased, I'll do some again, hopefully soon. Slowly I'm making everything. I'm also quite good at baking the things that I liked at home. I'm collecting recipes. Recently I made sweet and sour loin of beef. It says to use stale meat which is hard to get. Over a week old meat is hard to get. I also make brine often. Can you remember "speise" I can make that too, and we quite like it for a change sometimes. I like to cook as we did at home, mainly because I can do the dishes so well. I always think of you, what you would say about it, when something turns out particularly well. I also bake bread all the time. At the moment on our farm, there's not much to do, we're only milking 5 cows. I'm not doing anything now, we're slowing down as next week we want to go on our holiday and enjoy some of the beauty spots of this wonderful country. We really want to relax after 1½ years of work, so that we have more energy to start the next work period. We are very proud that our work has produced such good results. I must tell you, on that subject, that by giving the soil the right treatment we have achieved such fine results that our neighbour advises us to milk 50 cows next year, whereas he advised us to milk only 38-40 cows last year. At the moment we have 56 beasts and still don't have to feed them any hay, which our neighbours are all feeding their cows on now. This time last year we had 48 beasts and were already feeding them hay. We are always buying more stock and as well as that, we also have animals from other farms grazing on our land, of course, for pay. In Spring we want to procure another 500 hens and 200 ducks. At the moment we have about 100 hens. We pay for our living expenses from the sale of the eggs. We have also instituted other changes. We don't think we'll keep any pigs next year. We'll make cottage cheese from the skim milk, part of which we'll sell and part use as feed for the hens and ducks, because feed is very expensive. As you can see from this description, we are very content and happy and it would all be so wonderful if you were with us. Now I must tell you another piece of news - A Viennese couple are working near our farm, about 5 minutes away. A short while ago he lost his job and Franz found him a position as a builders labourer quite near to us. So we are quite close and live together. As we have been very good friends for the last 10 months it's lovely to be together like this. We intend to employ them on our farm in the next season, so it's a bit easier for us. This year we can take help on earlier as we have also improved our management of the farm. They would live in the old house that is still on the farm, we want to do it up for them with electric light, oven etc.

In the meantime they are living in the house with us. Hilde goes to town twice a week to a place where gymnastics are taught, she has a school there. Her nature is like Tante Hella's. Otto is a very conscientious, ambitious worker and I believe that both men, Franz and Otto, can achieve a lot together. Because of the extension of the farm management we have to make various additions and we usually need our neighbour to help with this, so it will be a very practical arrangement, if the 2 of them, both quite clever, do it on their own.

As for news of the house - I have redecorated the bathroom in bright yellow - you don't use white here. For the floor, I bought some nice linoleum. So it looks better and better. Everything is exactly noted in my diary, so you notice our progress.

I hope that you will write to me soon, perhaps the same evening as my letter reaches you in one piece if you are pleased with it. You are always in our thoughts, my dear, God willing, so that it won't be long till we see each other again. How long it's been! I hug and kiss you in spirit with all my heart and am your grateful, loving daughter.

My dearest family,
this time Franz got in first and I have to rack my brains to think what I can write about that's interesting. Before anything else, I must wish you both happy birthday from the bottom of my heart, may all your wishes be fulfilled and may you have joy from your children. Unfortunately I'll have to go without your good wishes this year as we're not getting any mail from you. We weren't worried that you're not writing to us although we wanted information and that's why we telegraphed.
The only news from the farm is to report that we bought a goose, locked her up in the pigsty at night and during the day we let her walk around a fenced off paddock (you're not allowed to fatten geese here). We fed the goose on maize and grass, looked after her and protected her for 4 weeks and then we killed her. We were very proud that by correct feeding we were able to get rid of the fishy taste which the gooseflesh here usually has. Here, the geese wander freely over the farm and eat whatever takes their fancy, even fish. That's why the gooseflesh tastes so bad. We had a proper Friday night's dinner, young goose with sauce and barches (Challah) Lovely!
I don't know if I already wrote and told you that I intend to make vegetable salad and sell it, with sauerkraut and cottage cheese. Of course I'll have to see if it would sell, they taste different to what people are used to..... tomorrow I'm taking the first delivery to town. They sell the sauerkraut in the finest delicatessens here (like Lipperts in Prague). Before, it was imported from Palestine and also from Canada. It's amazing how many of our people here supplement their income by making things at home to sell as well. Gloves, belts, artificial flowers, sweets, necklaces etc, there's quite a good market for all these things. Our friends, the Altmanns are in business at the moment making cardboard buckles that they want to manufacture. We're very excited with them over it and hope something develops out of it. Besides that, they have a second idea and I wondered if Otto might be interested in doing it in New York. They are orthopaedic sandals, to support fallen arches. The sandal consists of a wooden sole, that's made like an inner sole, so that the ball of the foot is lifted up and the outer side of the foot is pushed down. The shoe is held onto the foot by leather straps which go over the toes. The sandals are called Gymnastic footsandals because the toes are automatically pushed into the right position when walking. There is a German patent and it's very important to find out whether they are available in America. If your investigations show that they are not available, the Altmanns would send you a pair directly. In Vienna people bought these sandals for 7 Riechsmarks.
I think you could earn good money with this idea too. Perhaps it would be adviseable to telegraph us, if you're interested. As you can see, we're quite busy and if we continue like this we'll soon be millionaires.
Once again, best wishes, from you sincere,

Lizzie

Henderson 14th June 1941

Dearest Mulls,

I really don't know what's the matter with the mail, as again today there was no news, no mail from you. That's why we telegraphed and were pleased to get news from you, telegraphed in return. We had a letter from Eric Briess last week. When you see him, please give him my regards, I'll answer his letter soon. The main reason for today's letter, is to wish you both all the best for your respective birthdays. We wish you luck, health, and contentment and much joy in Marietta. I hope you celebrate your birthdays in a worthy fashion. In any event we'll drink your health as we now have a small store of wine, as it is not dearer than beer, though it's only drunk on special occasions.

I have probably already written suggesting that you register your letters, maybe there's a better chance that we'll get them that way. I assume that you 3 are still all right and know what the matter is here, as you are getting our regular letters. I've written personally to Marietta, as she didn't reply to the letter wishing her a happy birthday. Or perhaps she didn't get it? Hopefully you, dear Otto, are prospering in business in the current industrial upturn. Make sure you diligently supply Great Britain with everything she needs to free the world and don't go on strike so much. I tried again to get permission for your money to be transferred, but without result. I discussed the matter with different people, the investment of it, and everybody agrees that it is the safest thing to invest it in the farm and that is the main thing, that it's safe.

As I've already told you, we intend to keep more hens. In the meantime I can get on with building the chicken coops quietly as we're not getting our 2 month old chickens until October. If we had taken them earlier, they malt in winter when you get the best price for the eggs and then for 3 months they don't lay any, whereas, if we get them in October, they'll begin to lay in March/April and then they'll lay for 15 months till the following winter, when they'll malt.

Have you heard anything from Fredi? I'd like very much to know what's happening to him. As we told you previously, his money is still in London. Didn't you have a chance to ask him in spring, what to do with the money? As I have already written in previous letters, about 2,300 stamps in mint condition in pages of 50 "First Slovak Parliament Czechoslovak 10Kc" stamps with red stamp, divided into 3 lines are what I have here. In the Gibbons stamp catalogue these stamps are valued at 1 English shilling. Please enquire as to their worth in America. At the dealers in Prague, they told me there were only 160,000 of them issued, therefore I assume that few dealers will have ones of such good quality. In other words, I hope to get permission to send you some money in this way. Dear Otto, as soon as you get some information, please let me know immediately so I can apply for the permission.

At present it's winter here on the farm, it's raining a lot and the ground is wet. Despite this, there's loads of work. Slowly the cows are starting to calve, 2 have already calved. In the last few days 5 sows gave birth and we've got over 30 little piglets again. In 6-8 weeks, as soon as they are weaned we'll sell them all, except for the 12 we want to keep as between August and October you can get a good price for piglets. The cows will have calved and farmers will have to have pigs to use up the skim milk. The early winter rain took me by surprise as I still had 10% of the farm to fertilize and 25% to harrow. So these jobs had to wait for a few days of good weather. We tried to write home again through Cooks and the Red Cross and hope the family gets news of us this way.

Written by Frank to Otto (Mulls)

Henderson 7th August 1941

My dearest family,
Finally, after 8 months we got your registered letter posted on 25th July, as we could tell from the postmark. Of course it was a red letter day! A letter and as well as that the happy news that you're slowly getting settled. Unfortunately we don't know the outcome of these changes but the main thing is to know that as of the 1st July you're living in your own home, with your own furniture and we're very pleased for you. It's comforting for us to know that you're getting all our letters because then you know whatever we're doing and we can all rest easy.
Unfortunately the letters are less interesting now because things are repeated and we don't report every single happening. Naturally in our current situation we feel very settled. To a large extent here also, the new arrivals settle in the same area. Understandably we have to work hard and long hours unless we are lucky and are able to work in the same profession as before.
In your next letter, please write exactly how you got your new home, how the desk and typewriter work out. Where have you put the furniture? I had to laugh about the frig. I can see that Otto changed his attitude because of this. And the veranda with screens, dear god, it must be beautiful!!! I hear you have a doublebed, good excuse, that you didn't have enough room for separate beds, but it's nice isn't it, and takes up less space. You are posh, only walking on Persian rugs! But it's not imagination that they are stronger and more hardwearing than all other carpets. Hopefully your plans will come to fruition and in 3 months you will have it all organised. I can well imagine how proud you are of all you have, and quite rightly so. Today we are happier with smaller things than we used to be with bigger things.
How did Marietta enjoy the mountains, how is school? I'd love to have a photo of all 3 of you. We're sending you some again with this letter. I think I already told you in my last letter, about the Altmann's idea. They have thought it over and decided to leave it for a year. We would rather work longer hours than pay someone high wages and we worked out that it would cost too much if I couldn't work.
But thank God, I feel so strong that I'm careless and have to take it easy. So the Altmanns are looking for a job near us, and they almost had one, but it fell through at the last minute. They came here with absolutely nothing as well as that he's very inexperienced and for people like that it always takes longer for them to find their feet. It's incredible that a person with training as a gymnastics instructor and in healing massage for gymnastics, acrobatics and tapdancing, can't get a job in this country.
I thought you'd be pleased with the news of the increase in Porsolt's family, she's expecting in October, beginning of November, so I've heard. She's well, but her legs are a little swollen. Ilse Stein isn't working in the factory anymore because she had some kind of a nervous breakdown. She's making gloves, an occupation that is much sought after. From next week he has a new job, which will pay much more than he's been getting up to now, as a draftsman.
Last Sunday Aufrichts came to visit, but they had to leave earlier than planned as the child had a fever and I found out later she developed the measles the following day. Before, she had whooping cough, she's always sick with something. The child has been at school for a month, Flora is busy making feathers for hats, she's doing very well. I'll hand over to František, he always has something to say. Many kisses,
from your Lizzie

Letter from Lizzie to Otto and Marianne

1941?

It's very interesting for me, before and now, to visit the various sales where they sell not only cows, pigs, horses, dogs and poultry, but everything that people don't want or that they no longer have a use for. The goods are brought to the auction and sold, even the biggest rubbish.

So I had the following funny experience:

We had here on the farm a small hotwater boiler made of copper, that we didn't need, so I took it to the auction to sell. However, the reserve price wasn't reached so it didn't sell. When I went to collect it a very old man with a white beard, oilskin coat and northwester because it was a rainy day, approached me and the following debate ensued:

He: How much did you pay for it?

I: I didn't buy it, I wanted to sell it but the bid was too low.

He: How much would you take for it?

I: Oh, say 25 bob (shillings). I want to get rid of it.

He: After scratching his head. Would you take a quid (pound)?

I: Well, haven't for a quid, I told you I want to get rid of it.

Whereupon he drew close to me and said

Oh, no, I must get it for 15 bob, I'm a Scotchman

Whereupon I: Oh, no, you must pay 25 bob, I'm a Czechoslovakian, to the great enjoyment of the large crowd which had gathered by that time. Later I sold the boiler for 25 shillings.

Yesterday we were at the pictures with Porsolts, Hans Hess is sitting next to me and writing burning love letters. We had a letter last week from Robert and he is still content. He writes nothing about dear cousin Hans. Please write me Hugo Flamm's address in San Fransisco. So now I have gossiped myself dry, have nothing more to tell. Best regards to all our loved ones and hugs and kisses to all 3 of you, from us 2,

Fralis

Hans Hess was Mrs. Porsolt's brother, and was an old flame of Marianne's.

21.2.1941

My dearest family,

I can hardly express the delight with which we received your letter after so long and the happy news it contained. I know very well how it feels to be happy when you make progress. I must protest when my better half says that everything repeats itself on the farm, because there are a number of news-worthy developments and there's always something new.

At present we're milking 22 cows again and every day another cow calves. Hopefully by October we'll be milking all 45-50 of them.

A new development is that we're planting half an acre of pampass grass. (one acre is 4,000 sq.m). It'll take a good 18 months before it's ready for grazing, but it has the advantage of growing in summer and winter, whereas normal paddock grass is eaten up and in winter it's "dormant". That's the best time for the pampass grass to be used. It has other advantages as well, but I haven't got time to go into these at the moment. The main advantage is that you don't have to have hay if you have enough of it, in our case, about 4 acres. By taking cuttings from time to time as it grows it'll expand the area where the pampass grass is growing. I've already sorted out a convenient place for it, where previously ti-tree (a myrtle-like tree, 1-2m high) was growing. I've removed the Ti-tree and now I'll burn off all the rubbish there, plough, harrow and fertilize and plant in October. Between the rows I'm going to plant early potatoes. On a neighbour's farm which has about 8 acres of fallow ground, I'll prepare the soil as well and plant maize, which is quite expensive here, usually imported. So there's enough on the farm for us to have our hands full, although they say winter is the quiet time, I can't really agree.

As mentioned to you some time ago, we had the fowls already booked and had purchased part quantity materials for the fowl houses. None of our applications for remittance of the money had been granted with the exception of the possibility of remittance to England. To have at least this possibility, we applied 3 weeks later for this permit but were refused. As we would have had to pay for the cancellation of the booked fowls a fair amount and on the other hand it was not considered as safe as having the money in the Bank, we decided not to cancel the fowls and I shall therefore start building the fowl houses next month in expectation of the fowls arriving in October.

You write, dear Otto, that Pep Lang's relations had 3,000 chickens. If he had had them here, he could be a rich man in a few years. There's no problem selling the eggs here. The Price is officially controlled and you can send the eggs to market with no problems. However, we're selling ours privately because we'll do better out of it. We've sold all our little piglets which our 5 sows produced, except for 10. We'll keep these and fatten them ourselves otherwise we wouldn't have a use for the skimmilk. Now I've prepared everything so the chickens will be fed 80% with cottage cheese, for which you can get good money and the other feed like corn, maize and bran is pretty expensive. We'll sell some of the breeding sows so we can demolish the whole pigsty.

Thanks very much for the information on the stamps. I think I can sell them more profitably here, as long as they're in small quantities. Be careful about sharing the chicken farm with your friends, if you want to go ahead, with it find out from people who know, what the situation was like after the last war and the following 10 years.

Flora Fürth would be a pretty good card partner. It's best not to do anything with Fredi's money because the responsibility is too great and I've already made a mistake with your money, having it sent here because I wanted to help you. For all that, the money is well invested. You don't write whether Liesl is in Canada, what Fredi is doing in Sao Paulo, about Gretl, Berta, Georg and all the others. Is Repper still in New York? what's happening at Tivoli? You know how much we want to know, please write about it, in whatever detail you can. 1,000 hugs and kisses to all 3 of you, for today,

From your Franzl

Please write your exact new address, there was something stuck over it on the envelope. We're writing to Marta today, through Cooks.

Undated End 1941

We wanted to feed a small number of pigs (breeding sows) with the leftover whey and in time, sell the little 2 month old piglets. So we have sold about 40 little piglets and 3 sows and we only kept 2 sows and a boar. We've ordered the hens and ducks and have all the building materials here to build the new hen coops. I began building about mid September as we should get the little 2month old chickens in October. A neighbour who has 8 acres planted in maize let me have some land gratis (8 acres is about 32,000 quadrameters) and I intend to plant maize to feed the poultry in winter and sell the rest, so that we can keep bought feed down to a minimum. I cleared an acre of land on our farm, in winter and now it's ploughed, fertilized, cultivated and harrowed; I want to plant pampass grass there and I've already ordered it. As well as this we aim to milk 45 cows, so you can see, an ambitious program entailing a lot of work, but with the promise of successful results.

Then at New Year, putting it mildly, we received the wellmeant but strongly worded advice that we should sell the farm. You can imagine that it hit us like a bombshell. I can't repeat the exact state of affairs, I'll only be able to tell you when we've won the war, I saw all our hard work of the past 2 years with all the effort, love, enthusiasm and interest that went into building our existence, fall down altogether like a house of cards. Today we've already come to terms with the standard, often repeated New Zealand expression, "Don't worry, you will be allright". So we went like good, obedient children to list our farm with various Land Agents for sale. In the meantime we're milking our 30 cows (5 still to calve) which are pretty good, despite the fact that the present adverse weather means the grass is slow-growing. In spite of the unfavourable conditions, the yield of the farm is about the same as it was this time last year. I had my hands full, trying to cancel the building materials, poultry, plants and seeds that I'd ordered and in the cases where we had already taken delivery, to send them back.

As things stand at present on the sale of the farm, we should not only get back what we paid, at least, but also the capital we invested. When the sale will be finalised I can't say, could be next week or in half a year from now. We don't want to go farming in the BACK COUNTRY OR IN THE bush, so we'll head for Auckland and start up there with something new. I'm not worrying about it yet. I'll take life easy for a bit.

The single biggest worry is about all the family, dear God help them to survive all the obstacles in their paths. What are the 2 Fredis doing? (Frank's brother and Otto's brother). Liesl, Gretl, Georgs, Bertha? Are Eric (Briess, a cousin) and Mr. Repper still in your neighbourhood? We haven't heard anything of any of them for so long.

Broll still has some money in London. Is there a possibility that it can be sent to you? I would accept responsibility for it. We cannot do anything with your money at present but I shall attend to this matter as soon as we shall have moved to the city. Lizzie has written to you re Steins parents. Most urgent representations were made. He could also not get a permit for remittance. Please enquire whether you could get the money from a Bank there based on a Bank guarantee which we could give here. I do not know whether I can accomplish this here but I just had this thought and maybe we can find a way out that way.

I'm only doing the most urgent work on the farm now, but it keeps me on my feet all day. We got 100 ducks cheap, supply the eggs to a big bakery where we get stale bread gratis, feed the ducks with the bread and cottage cheese and so feed costs us nothing. I've mislaid Hugo Flamm's address please send it to me again. If it's not too much trouble, please send me the dates of your previous letters so I know which ones I haven't received. For today, Hugs and kisses,

From your Franzl